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— THE TRIAL OF JEFFREY SINCLAIR —

NO JAIL FOR GENERAL

Sexual misconduct case ends with reprimand, fine

By JENNIFER HLAD
Stars and Stripes

An Army general who once faced life in prison for sexual misconduct with a subordinate received a fine and a reprimand, a verdict that surprised military justice watchers and left unanswered many questions about the role of command influence in criminal cases.

One of the most high-profile sexual misconduct cases in years ended Thursday when a military judge at Fort Bragg, N.C., gave Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair a formal reprimand and ordered him to forfeit \$5,000 per month in pay for four months. Sinclair was allowed to remain in the military, kept his pension and avoided jail time under a plea deal that dropped the most serious charges of sexual assault, "open and notorious" sex and threatening to kill the accuser and her family.

Instead, Sinclair pleaded guilty to mistreating a female captain with whom he maintained a three-year relationship and misusing a government credit card to pursue the affair, among other lesser charges.

Sinclair was not given the officer's equivalent of a dishonorable discharge, a dismissal.

SEE SINCLAIR ON PAGE 4



Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair
TED RICHARDSON/AP

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair was allowed to remain in the military, kept his pension and avoided jail time under a plea deal that dropped the most serious charges.

Midshipman acquitted in academy sex assault case

By PAMELA WOOD
The Baltimore Sun

WASHINGTON — A former Navy football player was found not guilty of sexually assaulting a fellow midshipman at an off-campus party nearly two years ago.

A military judge, Marine

Corps Col. Daniel Daugherty, found Midshipman Joshua Tate not guilty Thursday morning at the conclusion of a court-martial at the Washington Navy Yard.

Tate was facing as much as 30 years in prison if he had been found guilty.

Tate also was charged with making false statements to investigators three times. Daugherty sent those charges back to Naval Academy Superintendent Vice Adm. Michael Miller for reconsideration. As commanding officer, Miller has the final say on whether to

prosecute under military law.

Daugherty said Wednesday that two other midshipmen accused of lying in connection with the case ultimately were not prosecuted in court and were punished administratively at the academy instead.

SEE ACADEMY ON PAGE 4

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's a scandal that commercially available, battlefield-proven technology is ready to go at a fraction of the billions of dollars the Pentagon is spending to build a similar analysis tool in-house."

Rep. Jim Moran, D-Va., a Pentagon report that appears to favor a less expensive intelligence program over the U.S.'s troubled Distributed Common Ground System

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1. Navy P-8A Poseidon arrives in Australia as jetliner search widens
2. DOD announces Army general officers' moves in Europe
3. Army Gen. Sinclair breaks down, asks judge to not punish family
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MIDEAST

SIGAR: US may be paying 'ghost' Afghan policemen

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — American taxpayers may be the victims of a 'ghost worker' scheme in Afghanistan, according to the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, an independent watchdog group created by Congress.

"The U.S. may be unwittingly helping to pay the salaries of nonexistent members of the Afghan National Police," John Sopko, the head of SIGAR, wrote in a Feb. 19 letter to commanders of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, which manages the majority of donated funds intended for the Afghan National Security Forces.

Sopko believes that some Afghans may be lining their pockets by collecting the paychecks of Afghan policemen whose names appear on payrolls but aren't actually on the force. His concerns are based on conversations he had during a recent trip to Afghanistan, as well as discussions with European officials.

Concerns about "ghost workers" in Afghanistan are not new. A 2011 SIGAR report raised

questions about the U.N.'s management of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, which is used to pay ANP salaries. SIGAR auditors found that neither the Afghan Ministry of Interior nor the U.N. could verify payroll data. There was "limited assurance that only ANP personnel who worked received pay," SIGAR concluded at the time.

Since 2002, the international community has contributed \$3.2 billion to LOTFA, \$1.2 billion of which came from the U.S., according to SIGAR.

The European Union is withholding 100 million euros — half of its contribution to LOTFA — due to concerns about how that money is being used, including the possibility of payments to ghost workers and other forms of financial mismanagement, according to Sopko.

"We must do more to understand how U.S. funds are flowing through the Afghan banking system, particularly those used to pay ANP salaries," Sopko wrote. "We lack an adequate understanding and oversight of how U.S. funds flow from LOTFA through the Afghan banking system to their destination in the hands of legiti-



STEPHEN DECATUR/Courtesy of U.S. ARMY

Afghan National Police prepare to graduate from an academy in 2009 at the ANP headquarters in Herat, Afghanistan.

mate ANSF personnel."

SIGAR has initiated an audit to scrutinize the reliability of ANSF personnel data, and to look at how that data are used for both the Afghan National Army and ANP payrolls, according to Sopko.

In a March 7 memo to SIGAR, Maj. Gen. Kevin Wendel, the CSTC-A commander, said the command discovered "discrepancies" in personnel and payroll records, including 54,000 erroneous personnel identification numbers in the LOTFA database used by the United Nations Development Program to manage and account for ANP payroll on behalf of international donors.

Wendel told Sopko that the erroneous ID numbers "could have facilitated LOTFA unwittingly making payments to nonexistent members on the ANP payroll."

Wendel outlined steps that CSTC-A has taken to address the MOI's financial management problems, including standing up its own audit division and requesting a Department of Defense Inspector General assessment of how payroll funds are accounted for within the Afghan financial

system. CSTC-A also has threatened to withhold money from the MOI if they don't improve their financial management practices, although not until after the Afghan presidential election and the initial stages of the upcoming fighting season.

"If there is significant ghost payrolling or other mismanagement of these funds, it is not only a waste of money, but reliance on inaccurate ANP numbers could undermine U.S. transition planning as we continue to withdraw troops from Afghanistan," Sopko wrote.

The U.S. strategy calls for handing off responsibility for Afghanistan's security to Afghan security forces by the end of the year as American troops leave the country. If ANP personnel numbers appear higher than they actually are due to payroll fraud, it could lead to inaccurate and overly optimistic U.S. and NATO assessments of the ANSF's ability to fight off Taliban insurgents after most international forces leave the country.

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Hearing delayed for soldier implicated in sex ring

By PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Article 32 hearing for an Army sergeant at Fort Hood in Texas who was tasked with helping prevent sexual assault but is suspected to have prostituted junior soldiers has been delayed.

According to a Wednesday news release from Fort Hood, a defense counsel requested a delay of the hearing for Sgt. 1st

Class Gregory McQueen. He was charged March 7 and faces 21 counts related to pandering, conspiracy, maltreatment of a subordinate, abusive sexual conduct, adultery and detrimental conduct.

Another Fort Hood soldier was court-martialed in the case. The Associated Press reported that Master Sgt. Brad Grimes was convicted in December of conspiring to patronize a prostitute and solicitation to commit adul-

tery, and was reprimanded and demoted.

According to a report in the Killeen Daily Herald, a female private testified in Grimes' court-martial under a grant of immunity that she was having financial difficulties when McQueen discussed the possibility of her working as an escort for high-ranking noncommissioned officers, as well as for civilians, who were willing to pay to "hang out" and have sex with low-

ranking soldiers.

This case and others have increased pressure on the Pentagon to confront sexual misconduct in the military. Congress has debated remedies for months.

At the time of the suspected incidents, McQueen was a sexual assault prevention officer with III Corps' Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion.

The special court-martial convening authority approved the request for delay until June 3.

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MIDEAST

10 Afghanistan police killed in insurgent attack

BY JOSH SMITH
AND ZUBAIR BABAKKHAHIL
Stars and Stripes

KABUL — At least 10 Afghan police officers were killed in a five-hour gunbattle in the eastern city of Jalalabad early Thursday, as insurgents attacked a police station and a provincial governor's office.

The clash came just weeks before the pivotal national presidential elections on April 5. The Taliban have vowed to disrupt the elections, calling them a "plot of the invaders."

A group of seven insurgents launched the attack just after 5 a.m. They first set off a bomb at the police station, then detonated another at the governor's office, Nangarhar Police Chief Fazal

Ahmed Sherzad told Stars and Stripes.

Three attackers blew themselves up during the action, while the other four eventually were killed by the security forces, he said.

At least 10 policemen also died, including the station chief and the deputy commander of the rapid reaction force that responded to the attack, Sherzad said. A civilian student was killed in the crossfire and 14 officers were wounded.

Afghan Ministry of the Interior spokesman Sediq Sediqi expressed his condolences on Twitter for the police officers who died.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack on social media and in messages to media



RAHMAT GUL/AP

An Afghan Army soldier inspects bulletproof vests found after Taliban insurgents attacked a police station Thursday in Jalalabad, eastern Afghanistan.

outlets, saying they had targeted the police station before moving on to other targets.

Naemullah, a local resident, said the first two explosions were very loud and shattered doors and windows around the city.

As the fighting continued, many streets were closed as ambulances rushed to and from the scene carrying the wounded to a local hospital, he said.

At least 17 civilians died in a suicide bombing in northern Afghan-

istan on Tuesday. No one claimed responsibility for that attack, but the Taliban have promised to increase their campaign of violence before and during the elections.

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Proposed Apache cuts worry former SC Guard leader

BY SUSANNE M. SCHAFER
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — A Pentagon plan to take Army National Guard Apache attack helicopters from America's citizen-soldiers doesn't sit well with the South Carolina general who commanded an Apache battalion and flew the fearsome choppers for 1,500 hours during his 37-year career.

"It could be problematic for the U.S. Army as a whole. You are losing upward of 20 years of experience that we, the nation, need," said Maj. Gen. Les Eisner, 60, who retired from his post as the state's No. 2 military commander on March 5.

The South Carolina AH-64s have deployed to Bosnia, Kuwait, and twice to Iraq. The retired general said the unit has proven itself in battle, and has done it at a far cheaper alternative than full-time units in the active-duty Army.

The move would strip about 200 choppers from National Guard units in eight states: South and North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Utah, Idaho, Arizona and Texas. Eisner said the decision also would affect logistical hubs for the aircraft in California, Connecticut, Missouri and Mississippi.

Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., has put forward a bill to block the transfer of the AH-64s, and he also is seeking a commission to study the Army changes. The measure has gained 120 co-sponsors.

"This situation restructuring plan would have a significantly negative impact on Army Nation-



TRACCI DORIAN, COURTESY OF THE U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/AP

Members of the South Carolina National Guard's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion prepare Apaches to leave for Camp Buehring, Kuwait, in 2011.

al Guard aviation and the total Army. The National Guard is the primary combat reserve for the Army and should mirror the active duty force," Wilson said in a statement.

South Carolina's 24 Apaches are based at McEntire Joint National Guard Base near Eastover. North Carolina also has 24, based near Raleigh-Durham International Airport. The N.C. Guard has deployed to both Afghanistan and Iraq since the terrorist strikes of 9/11.

"If they take all of those assets and only put them in the ac-

tive Army, essentially, they have cleaned their cupboard out. And if they find themselves in a bind, they can't go back to the National Guard and say, 'Hey, I need an Apache instructor pilot,' because the cupboard will be bare," Eisner said.

The Army proposed the move several weeks ago as part of its belt-tightening budget. It would give the Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters in place of the combat-ready Apaches, arguing the transports are more appropriate to states' disaster response and homeland defense missions.

'If they take all of those assets and only put them in the active Army, essentially, they have cleaned their cupboard out.'

Retired Maj. Gen. Les Eisner
former No. 2 commander of the South Carolina National Guard

Eisner said losing the Apaches will translate into the loss of state jobs. The unit's pilots, and maintenance personnel and support crews add up to more than 150 Guard members, Eisner said, who might not easily be transferred to other positions.

The choppers are considered the most lethal in the Army's arsenal and resemble flying locusts. Crewed by a pilot and a co-pilot who also acts as a gunner, the aircraft can fly in day or night conditions. It is armed with Hellfire missiles, which use precision guidance systems to destroy targets such as tanks or enemy radar systems.

Eisner said the theory behind the Guard, considered a "reserve" or backup to the active-duty forces, has been proven when the South Carolina unit was called out twice to serve in Iraq, and when they provided instructor pilots to tutor active-duty Apache pilots.

They even flew as the guardian forces watching over the U.S. troops when the last units pulled out of Iraq in 2011.

"We've mobilized, we've deployed, we've been successful, and we've done it as a cheaper cost," Eisner said, pointing out

that many Guard members have full-time civilian jobs and train on the weekends, so no large support bases, schools, day-care units or housing are needed for them.

Eisner pointed out that ultimately, the decision is up to Congress. "Congress has the power of the purse and Congress ultimately makes the decision. If they act prudently, we are able to keep them in the reserve," Eisner said. "We are a significant savings to taxpayers."

Guard units traditionally argue that they can keep some of the nation's most experienced military professionals on call instead of paying them full-time to keep them in the military.

The general said he fears that stripping the combat aviation forces from the Guard is only the first step in reducing its combat capabilities. The Guard has fought for years to drop the "weekend warrior" moniker and to prove themselves when they are called up for active duty missions.

"If they take the AH-64, what's next?" Eisner said, noting that the Guard also has artillery and tank units that are key to the Pentagon's backup forces.

MILITARY

Sinclair: General 'shamed' officer corps, lawyer says

FROM FRONT PAGE

If he had been dismissed, Sinclair would have lost all retirement pay and benefits. But he still will go before a grade determination board that will decide at what rank he will be allowed to retire.

Greg Rinckey, a Washington attorney and former Army judge advocate general, said the sentence was "mildly surprising" but "in the realm" of an appropriate sentence for the offenses to which he admitted.

Yet the case is likely to reinforce arguments by critics that the military justice system is flawed and especially incapable of handling sexual offenses involving subordinates.

"This case has illustrated a military justice system in dire need of independence from the chain of command," said Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, who sponsored legislation to remove sexual offense cases from the chain of command.

A spokeswoman for Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., who fought the bill, said the case reinforced her argument.

"As a former sex crimes prosecutor, Claire knows how difficult these cases can be to prosecute, and this case is obviously a complicated one. But one of its lessons highlights what we already know — that commanders are often more aggressive than prosecutors in pursuing prosecutions and vetting these cases," spokeswoman Sarah Feldman said.

John Altengraber Jr., a Washington lawyer who served as the deputy judge advocate general for the Army from 1997 to 2001, said that even with the plea bargain, Sinclair could have received jail time. Before the sentence was announced, Altengraber said an appropriate sentence would have been dismissal, which is the officer equivalent of a dishonorable discharge, and several years' confinement.

"He shamed the entire officer corps and he's a disgrace to the uniform," he said. "He undermines all senior officers in the military by what he's done."

In the military judicial system, plea deals put a cap on the maximum punishment a defendant can receive, and they must be agreed to by the defendant and the convening authority. However, the judge does not see the agreed-upon maximum punishment until after a sentence has been delivered. Once the judge hands down the sentence, he or she reads the maximum sentence agreed to in the plea bargain, and the defendant receives the lesser of the two punishments.

The plea agreement, unsealed Thursday, called for Sinclair to serve no more than 18 months in jail, but the judge's punishment was much lighter.

"Some people will say he got the officer discount," while an enlisted soldier may have gotten a few months' worth of confinement, Rinckey said. "That's always the big issue that we see spring up ...

and that's a valid point."

Overreach and influence

A string of high-profile cases has fueled the ongoing debate about how the military handles sexual assaults and how best to reform the military justice system. But the Sinclair trial is muddier, with details that don't fit the framework of previous cases.

Military judge Col. James C. Pohl last week ruled that the Army exerted unlawful command influence when Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson, the commanding general at Fort Bragg at the time, turned down a plea deal for Sinclair before the trial began.

Pohl's ruling, which followed revelations that advocates for the accuser suggested that not pursuing the case would look bad in the current political climate, opened the door for a new plea deal that Sinclair and a different general agreed to earlier this week, which included dropping the charges of sexual assault and "open and notorious" sex. In return, Sinclair pleaded guilty to mistreating the captain with whom he had a three-year affair and misusing a government credit card to pursue the affair, among other charges.

Command influence is inherent in the military judicial system. Military commanders determine whether to prosecute their troops and sign off on plea bargains and sentences. But unlawful command influence, or when a commander says or does something to influence his subordinates regarding the outcome of judicial proceedings, is "the mortal enemy of the military justice system," said Rinckey.

Unlike the cases that raised the public and congressional concern about sexual assault in the military, the unlawful command influence in the case appeared to be working against Sinclair, rather than for him.

"I think the whole [political] atmosphere that has been permitted to occur has made it very, very difficult for people to think straight on this subject," said Eugene Fidell, who teaches military law at Yale Law School. "This was a train wreck."

Fidell supports a proposal by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., to remove prosecution authority in serious cases away from the victim and defendant's military commander and to give it to an independent military prosecutor. The plan earlier this month failed to clear the threshold to overcome a filibuster threat in the Senate.

And though Fidell and other legal experts believe the outcome of the Sinclair trial may well have been the same, regardless, he said having that judicial independence would have impacted public confidence in the way military justice is administered and "the system would have been spared a black eye."

Information from The Associated Press was used in this report. hiad.jennifer@stripes.com
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THE TOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL/AP

Fred Phelps, who died Thursday, displays one of his many protest signs.

Preacher who led protests at military funerals dies

By STEVE CHAWKINS
Los Angeles Times

Fred Phelps, a publicity-hungry Kansas pastor who picketed hundreds of military funerals because he believed America was too sympathetic to gays, died early Thursday in Topeka, Kan. He was 84.

His daughter, Margie Phelps, confirmed his death to the Associated Press but did not give the cause.

With his small Topeka congregation, Phelps also demonstrated at funerals and memorials for Frank Sinatra, Michael Jackson, former Mormon leader Gordon B. Hinckley and heavy metal singer Ronnie James Dio — any obser-

vance, regardless of any connection to gay issues, where cameras might be rolling.

Convinced that the deaths of U.S. soldiers were divine retribution for the nation's increasing acceptance of homosexuality, Phelps and his followers carried signs like: "Thank God for Dead Soldiers" and "God Hates the USA/Thank God for 9/11." A disbarred attorney, Phelps and his Westboro Baptist Church were sued numerous times but won a landmark freedom-of-speech case in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Despite its name, his church is unaffiliated with any denomination. Its Web address, more reflective of its founder's theology, contains an anti-gay slur.

The congregation is heavily composed of his relatives, including many of his 13 children and 54 grandchildren.

Two of his estranged sons, Nate and Mark, have said that Phelps' clan "excommunicated" him last year. The church declined to comment.

Phelps came to national attention in 1998 leading anti-gay pickets at the Casper, Wyo., funeral of Matthew Shepard, a gay 21-year-old who had been lashed to a fence post and beaten to death. Five years after the funeral, Phelps returned to Casper with plans to erect a granite monument inscribed: "Matthew Shepard Entered Hell Oct. 12, 1998."

Academy: Defendant did not testify in case

FROM FRONT PAGE

Tate, a former football player, had been accused of having sex at the party with a female classmate who was so drunk she couldn't have consented.

The reputed victim testified that she drunk heavily before and during the party and did not remember having sex with Tate in a car outside the party. She said that when she confronted Tate the next day after hearing rumors, he said they had sex.

She initially did not cooperate with the investigation and acknowledged urging Tate to lie, but said she later had a change of heart and wanted to pursue the

case. Tate did not testify during the court-martial.

With the decision in Tate's case, the Navy did not secure a guilty verdict against any of the three former football players initially investigated in the case, which drew national attention amid sexual assault in the military.

Ensign Tra'va Bush, who was a midshipman at the time, was not formally charged following a preliminary hearing last year.

Midshipman Eric Graham was charged with abusive sexual contact and making false statements. His case was dropped following pretrial rulings that were not fa-

vorable to the prosecution. He is in the process of withdrawing from the academy.

The reputed victim is now a senior at the academy.

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MILITARY

Vets' jobless rate edges down, but is still high

By TOM RAUM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — New Labor Department figures show the unemployment rate for working-age veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces since September 2001 edged down slightly in 2013, to 9.0 percent. But Thursday's report also found that the rate remained well above the overall civilian unemployment figure of 6.7 percent.

The decrease followed a decline to 9.9 percent in 2012.

The statistics cover veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces at any time since September 2001, a group referred to as Gulf War-era veterans.

Still, the number was far higher than overall unemployment levels in the United States, which averaged 7.4 percent in 2013 and finished the year with a 6.7 percent overall rate for December. The overall unemployment rate was also 6.7 percent in February 2014.

The report found that the jobless rate for veterans remained well above the overall civilian figure.

The report by the agency's Bureau of Labor Statistics said that the overall unemployment rate for all veterans still considered in the work force, including those from earlier periods, was 6.6 percent for all of 2013, down

from 7.0 percent the year before.

Twenty-nine percent of veterans serving since 2001 reported having service-connected disabilities as of last August, compared with 15 percent of all veterans.

In 2013, 21.4 million men and women, or 9 percent of the general population 18 and older, were veterans, the report said.

Veterans who served during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam era accounted for roughly half of the total veteran population in the United States of 21.4 million men and women.

The unemployment rate for recent veterans has been noticeably higher than it is for nonveterans in the same demographic group, although the gap has been narrowing.

The new numbers came out a day after President Barack Obama awarded the Medal of Honor to 24 Army veterans in recognition of their valor during major combat operations in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

The annual report was compiled by the Labor Department with the help of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Among all of the veterans, the unemployment rate for women fell to 8.9 percent in 2013 while the rate for men fell to 6.6 percent.

Army team to prep for training Libyans

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A small team of soldiers will go into Libya in the coming weeks to begin preparations for a larger U.S. mission to train Libyan troops in Bulgaria, a senior Army official said Wednesday.

According to the official, fewer than a dozen soldiers will go to Tripoli but that number could grow as the group begins selecting the Libyan troops who will receive U.S. training. About 500 soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division will train between 5,000 and 8,000 Libyan forces in basic combat skills as part of a larger international effort to improve security in the North African nation.

About 500 soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division will train between 5,000 and 8,000 Libyan forces in basic combat skills.

The training was announced late last year, but sending a team into Libya was not. The team initially will be working with the Libyans to determine the scope and details of the training.

The official said that as time goes on and

the effort to select the Libyan troops expands, some additional soldiers could go to Tripoli to provide security for the team.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to publicly discuss the matter by name.

Officials are waiting on final approval for the team to go to Tripoli. And the training will not begin until Libya approves the funding needed for the mission. That approval could happen sometime next month.

There are concerns about the rise of a number of militias in Libya as the nation's weak government struggles to take control in the aftermath of the ouster and death of Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

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MILITARY

DOD withholds report on flawed \$2.7B intel effort

By GORDON LUBOLD
AND SHANE HARRIS

Foreign Policy

WASHINGTON — The Army has spent years defending a multibillion-dollar intelligence system that critics say costs too much and does too little. A new, internal report has found that there's a simple, relatively inexpensive program that could handle many of the same jobs at a fraction of the cost. For the past eight months, though, the Pentagon has kept the report hidden away.

Members of Congress have been asking Defense Department officials to send them the assessment, a copy of which was obtained by Foreign Policy, but the Pentagon has yet to do so. At issue is the Army's Distributed Common Ground System, expected to cost nearly \$11 billion over 30 years and built by a consortium of major contractors, including Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics. The system is meant to give troops on the ground an easy way to collect intelligence about terrorists and enemy fighters, and then to create detailed reports and maps that they can share with each other to plan and conduct operations. But critics — and even some troops — have long complained that the system doesn't actually work. They say

it's too slow and hard to use, and that it has left them searching for alternatives in the war zone.

The system's high cost and technical failings prompted a search for other options. Palantir Technologies, a fast-growing Silicon Valley firm, told the Pentagon that its off-the-shelf systems could accomplish most of the same tasks but cost far less — millions of dollars, rather than billions. The Marine Corps, Special Operations forces, the CIA, and a host of other government agencies already use it. Army officials, though, said Palantir wasn't up to the job. Now, a 57-page report by the Pentagon's acquisitions arm basically says the Army was wrong to dismiss the Palantir system. The study instead gives Palantir high marks on most of the Army's 20 key requirements for the intelligence system, including the ability to analyze large amounts of information, including critical data about terrorist networks and the locations of explosive devices, and synchronize it in a way that helps troops on the ground combat their enemies more effectively.

Palantir "can be utilized to partially meet DCGS-A requirements," the report concludes, using the acronym for the Distributed Common Ground System. The report is likely to sharpen concerns about the Distributed

Common Ground System, which has been facing mounting criticism on Capitol Hill. Rep. Jim Moran, D-Va., one of many long-time detractors, had asked the Pentagon for its findings as recently as last month.

"It's a scandal that commercially available, battlefield-proven technology is ready to go at a fraction of the billions of dollars the Pentagon is spending to build a similar analysis tool in-house," Moran said in a statement to FP. "I appreciate [Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics] Frank Kendall taking this issue seriously, and look forward to hopefully resolving it once and for all when the long overdue report's findings are finally released."

The report, commissioned roughly one year ago, won't deal a fatal blow to the controversial Army program. But it raises new questions about why the service is wedded to its own system and why officials have been so quick to dismiss Palantir's capabilities, especially at a time when the Pentagon's budget is shrinking and Congress is pressing Defense Department officials to find ways of saving money.

An Army official referred a query from FP to the Pentagon's acquisition arm. Maureen Schumann, a spokeswoman, ac-



Courtesy of the Defense Department

A report by the Pentagon's acquisitions arm says the Army was wrong to dismiss the Palantir intelligence-collection system.

knowledgeed that the Defense Department's acquisition officials had commissioned a "top level analysis" last summer and presented its findings to officials internally. This spring, Schumann said, Kendall will respond to queries from members of Congress on the findings of that analysis. But it remains unclear if the assessment, itself, will ever be released. Officials at Palantir declined to comment for this story.

The report that was obtained by FP is steeped in bureaucratic terminology, but at its heart, it says the Palantir system it assesses could play a key role in Afghanistan or future war zones. The assessment, completed last summer, was first commissioned by Kendall after Moran and others asked more pointed questions about what the Palantir system could and could not do for the Army. Ultimately, the hope is to obtain an effective intelligence system that will help troops hunt terrorists, predict insurgent attacks, and plan safe missions. With the wars of the future likely to be guerrilla wars like Iraq and Afghanistan,

the Army intelligence program will only grow more important in the years to come.

The report consists of a detailed set of charts, graphs and analyses. It doesn't say that Palantir could replace the Army system, and its authors didn't conduct a head-to-head comparison of the two. But it concludes that Palantir, which has collected legions of fans in national security circles and has contracts with the CIA and FBI, performs "very good" or "excellent" on most key requirements, including some that Army brass had long insisted the company was unable to fulfill.

Palantir has "a rich suite of [applications] applicable to" the Army system and has "robust" capabilities to collect many different kinds of information that can be used to create intelligence reports and allow troops to share information with each other, the review finds.

Army officials have long complained that Palantir cannot be used with other applications that are already incorporated into the Army system.

Pvt. Manning seeks formal name change to Chelsea

By DAVID DISHNEAU
The Associated Press

The Army private who was tried and convicted as Bradley Edward Manning for leaking U.S. secrets to WikiLeaks is petitioning to a Kansas court for a name change, to Chelsea Elizabeth Manning. Leavenworth County District Court has scheduled an April 23 hearing on the request, according to a Leavenworth Times legal notice sent Wednesday to The Associated Press by a spokesman at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., where Manning is serving a 35-year sentence. The petition was filed Jan. 27 and published March 1 after it was submitted by Manning's lawyer, David Coombs of Providence, Rhode Island.

Coombs didn't immediately respond to questions about the petition. Manning said in an October letter to supporters that Coombs would help her with the name change.

The Private Manning Support Network announced the petition on its website Wednesday. The group also said it is changing its

name to the Chelsea Manning Support Network.

Officials at Fort Leavenworth have said Manning would have to get a legal name change to be known as Chelsea.

The Associated Press has referred to Manning as Chelsea since shortly after she announced in August her desire to be known by that name and to be treated as a woman. Manning has been diagnosed by at least two Army behavioral health specialists with gender dysphoria, or gender identity disorder. In addition to the name change, Manning has asked to receive hormone replacement therapy and to live as a woman while incarcerated.

The military has said it does not provide treatment for gender dysphoria because the Pentagon policy dictates that transgender soldiers are not allowed to serve.



Manning

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MILITARY

Airman gets 50 years for molesting kids

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Nearly three years after the first reported molestation of a child in the Kaiserslautern Military Community, an airman formerly assigned to Ramstein Air Base has been convicted of committing numerous sexual and kidnapping offenses against four young victims.

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael L. Merritt was sentenced to 50 years' imprisonment Tuesday by a military judge at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., according to Air Force officials in Europe and Wyoming.

His length of confinement will be capped at 25 years due to the terms of a pretrial agreement, according to joint news releases issued by U.S. Air Forces in Europe and F.E. Warren. Air Force officials said there was no other limitation on the sentence.

Merritt's punishment also included reduction to airman basic, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and a dishonorable discharge.

In exchange for the pretrial agreement, Merritt, during a judge-only general court-martial, pleaded guilty to charges involving four children over a period of 10 years, from 2003 to 2013. The charges included aggravated sexual assault, sexual abuse, sodomy, assault consummated by a battery, kidnapping and attempted kidnapping, the Air Force said.

Merritt was a facility manager for the 319th Missile Squadron at F.E. Warren. He served there in a support role and did not



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Children answer questions during a "stranger danger" presentation at the Vogelweh Youth Center on May 16, 2012 after a child molester was reported in the Kaiserslautern-Ramstein area.

have direct contact with the base's nuclear operations mission, officials said. The pretrial agreement saved four young child victims from having to testify and recount Merritt's abuse in a litigated trial, according to the F.E. Warren news release.

Most of the charges against Merritt stemmed from offenses he committed while he was at Ramstein, an assignment that began in October 2006 and ended in August 2013, when he made a permanent change-of-station move to F.E. Warren, officials said.

The news releases said the offenses occurred on bases in Germany and the U.S. Officials would not say where Merritt was stationed before Germany, citing the ongoing investigation.

An investigation in Germany was launched after a child came forward in January 2012 to say a man had pulled her into his car and molested her in the Ramstein housing area, according to the USAFE news release. Air Force officials said in 2012 that the incident occurred in August 2011.

Several children in Ramstein and Vogelweh housing areas came forward within that year to report kidnapping attempts and molestations, according to the USAFE news release.

The perpetrator lured children in broad daylight inside the gated military communities while reportedly wearing clothing that resembled a military uniform.

Base officials stepped up security patrols, held town hall meetings to spread the word, and tightened child supervision rules, raising the age limit at which children could be left unsupervised.

"We are grateful that the families of the KMC area finally have closure on this," Lt. Gen. Tom Jones, USAFE and Air Forces Africa vice commander and KMC commander, was quoted as saying in the news release. "This predator caused a lot of pain and suffering in our community, and we hope this conviction provides healing and a sense of security for all those affected."

Merritt for months eluded detection. Investigators pinpointed Merritt as the sole perpetrator after forensic evidence analyzed by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory matched evidence found on some of the children's clothing, said Lt. Col. Christopher J. Ouellette, Air Force Office of

Special Investigations, 13th Field Investigations Squadron commander, according to the USAFE news release.

The forensic evidence, combined with witness testimonies and corroborated circumstantial evidence, helped lead to Merritt's arrest at F.E. Warren, officials said.

Merritt was taken into military custody last October after his reassignment to F.E. Warren in August.

USAFE officials said Merritt, while in Germany, lived in Vogelweh housing. At Ramstein, he held a variety of jobs at the 86th Airlift Wing and 435th Munitions Squadron.

The investigation into Merritt's actions are continuing, Ouellette said, and it's believed there could be many more victims. Individuals who may have knowledge of crimes by Merritt, or may have been a potential victim of his or other unknown perpetrators, are urged to contact OSI.

Investigators spent several months conducting more than 600 interviews and collecting more than 250 forensic samples from potential suspects. OSI agents received more than 100 tips from KMC residents, said Special Agent Michael Tischer, 13th FIS, Major Crimes Division.

"Without direct community involvement, leadership support and cooperation from the brave victims, we would not have succeeded in identifying this sexual predator," Tischer was quoted as saying in the news release.

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NATION



Jim Lee/AP

Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks after receiving the American Jewish Congress' lifetime achievement award on Wednesday in New York.

Hillary Clinton 'skeptical' about Iranian nuclear deal

By PHILIP RUCKER
The Washington Post

NEW YORK — Hillary Rodham Clinton cast doubt on the interim nuclear agreement with Iran, saying in a muscular policy speech here Wednesday night that she is "personally skeptical" that Iran's leaders will follow through on a comprehensive agreement to end their march toward nuclear weapons.

Still, the former secretary of state and potential 2016 presidential candidate told a pro-Israel audience in New York that she stands behind the Obama administration's negotiations with Iran, and she commended the work of her successor, John Kerry.

Clinton said the United States should "give space for diplomacy to work" and avoid imposing new unilateral sanctions or any other actions that might lead any allies to back out of existing international sanctions against Iran.

"The odds of reaching that comprehensive agreement are not good," Clinton said. "I am also personally skeptical that the Iranians would follow through and deliver. I have seen their behavior over years. But this is a development that is worth testing."

If the negotiations with Iran fail, however, Clinton said the United States should explore "every other option."

"Let's be clear," she said, "every other option does remain on the table."

In a 30-minute address at an American Jewish Congress gala — where she was honored with a lifetime achievement award by actress Julianna Margulies and serenaded at the dinner table by

Israeli singer Liel Kolet — Clinton presented herself as a tough defender of Israel in the Senate and at the State Department.

"When Americans of all faiths look at Israel, we see a homeland for a people long oppressed and a democracy that has to defend itself at every turn," Clinton said. "In Israel's story, we see our own."

Clinton described in detail her role in shaping the country's policies with regard to Iran from the earliest days of the Obama administration. This is likely to be a focus of her forthcoming memoir, due out this spring, which she teased in a separate speech earlier Wednesday.

Addressing the Association of American Publishers, Clinton said the book would cover challenges in the 21st century from Crimea to climate change. "Just another light summer read," she quipped.

She described her study at home as an episode of "Hoarders," with book notes and chapter drafts piled up all over. And she said her advisers, family and friends are vigorously debating the merits of her paragraphs.

Clinton is still mulling a title — although she joked that she was considering "The Scrunchie Chronicles: 112 Countries and It's Still All About My Hair," a winner from a reader contest last year in The Washington Post's "In the Loop" column.

In her book, Clinton will frame her State Department legacy and lay out her views on a range of important policy matters ahead of a potential presidential campaign.

Clinton said the book would be "about my experiences at

the State Department, our rapidly changing and increasingly interdependent world, and the challenges facing us in the 21st century.

Paul bashes Obama, others on surveillance

By PAUL ELIAS
The Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — In a university speech, Republican Sen. Rand Paul criticized President Barack Obama and other government leaders over recent surveillance disclosures.

"I find it ironic that the first African-American president has without compunction allowed this vast exercise of raw power by the NSA," said Paul Wednesday, noting that other black heroes such as Martin Luther King Jr. were targets of illegal government spying.

Paul was warmly received at the University of California, Berkeley, as he held forth for 30 minutes on what he perceives to be abuses of government spy programs and a lack of oversight of the National Security Agency.

Paul, who is considering a presidential bid and is seen as one of several GOP front-runners ahead of 2016, called for the creation of a bipartisan congressional committee to address allegations raised by Democratic Sen. Diane Feinstein of California that CIA agents secretly searched Senate computers.

He said he hoped that such a commission would be similar to the Church Committee of the 1970s, referring to the special Senate panel that exposed CIA abuses and pushed through laws limiting the intelligence community's powers.

Dressed in blue jeans, a white

Ralph Lauren shirt with logo, red tie and cowboy boots, Paul spent much of his time trying to connect with his college-age audience, warning several times that their phones and computers were easily accessed by government snoops.



Paul

"I believe what you do on a cellphone is none of their damn business," he said to applause.

He compared the Republican Party to a Domino Pizza's ad campaign in which the company admits to having made bad dough in the past but promising change in the future.

"We need a different kind of party," he said.

Paul was asked his thoughts on Edward Snowden, the NSA contractor who leaked thousands of pages of sensitive documents exposing embarrassing intelligence practices. Snowden is living in Moscow, afraid of criminal prosecution if he returns to the United States.

Paul said that he had "mixed emotions" about Snowden. On the one hand, Paul said Snowden broke the law, but that he shouldn't be shot or stung up. On the other hand, Paul said Snowden helped expose "an intelligence community that's drunk with power, unrepentant and unwilling to relinquish power."

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NATION

New dinosaur called 'Chicken from Hell'

By JOEL ACHENBACH
The Washington Post

Scientists have discovered a freakish, birdlike species of dinosaur — 11 feet long, 500 pounds, with a beak, no teeth, a bony crest atop its head, murderous claws, prize-fighter arms, spindly legs, a thin tail and feathers sprouting all over the place. Officially, it's a member of a group of dinosaurs called oviraptorosaurs.

Unofficially, it's the "Chicken from Hell." That's the nickname the scientists have been using. This dino-bird is not literally a chicken, or even a bird. It's definitely a dinosaur, and it lived at the end of the Cretaceous period, from about 68 million to 66 million years ago.

"It would have been a cross between a chicken and a lizard," said Tyler Lyson, a paleontologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, who excavated some of the fossils on his uncle's North Dakota ranch in 1999.

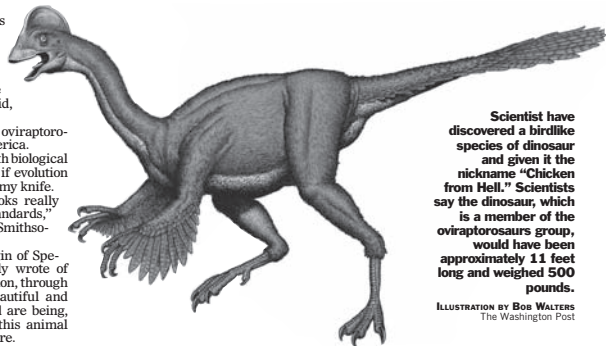
The fossils of three specimens of the new dinosaur were found in a sedimentary rock layer known as the Hell Creek Formation in three locations in North and South Dakota. The formation, the scientists said, helped inspire the nickname.

It's a big animal, the biggest oviraptorosaur species found in North America.

The new dinosaur is loaded with biological accessories and adaptations, as if evolution had been inspired by a Swiss Army knife.

"This group of dinosaurs looks really bizarre even by dinosaurian standards," said Hans-Dieter Sues, another Smithsonian paleontologist.

In the final line of "The Origin of Species," Charles Darwin famously wrote of the "grandeur" of natural selection, through which "endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved" — but he never saw this animal from a Colonel Sanders nightmare.



Scientist have discovered a birdlike species of dinosaur and given it the nickname "Chicken from Hell." Scientists say the dinosaur, which is a member of the oviraptorosaurs group, would have been approximately 11 feet long and weighed 500 pounds.

ILLUSTRATION BY BOB WALTERS
The Washington Post



AP

A line of trucks plow roads in Birmingham Township, Pa., on Feb. 13. In Pennsylvania, legislators have approved special appropriations that will help pay for state snow costs but won't cover everything.

Winter's snowy barrage hammers road budgets

By JOHN FLESHER
The Associated Press

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — In Michigan's way-up-north Keweenaw Peninsula, where 200 inches of snow in a single season elicits barely a shrug, officials know there's nothing in the budget more important than keeping the roads passable.

Yet even they have been caught short this merciless winter. Houghton County planned to spend around \$2.1 million for plowing, salting and related maintenance, which experience suggested would be plenty, but has overshot it by \$500,000 and counting.

State and local governments across a huge swath of the nation, from the Great Plains to the Upper Midwest and the Deep South to New England, are experiencing sticker shock after one of the coldest, snowiest, iciest winters in memory. Many have spent two or three times as much as they budgeted for clearing roads. More bad weather could send costs higher.

Even as Thursday's official arrival of spring presages warmer weather, it's clear that winter's bitter aftertaste will linger much

longer as officials compensate for untold millions in unexpected spending that includes patching a rash of potholes. In some states, legislatures are already preparing emergency appropriations. Elsewhere, road agencies are delaying repaving projects, cutting back on roadside mowing and summer hires, dipping into rainy-day funds and making do with battered equipment instead of buying more.

Virginia budgeted \$157 million for snow removal and may exceed it by \$150 million — probably the most the state has ever spent for the purpose. "The bills are still coming in," spokeswoman Tamara Rollinson said.

Montgomery County, Md., in the Washington, D.C., suburbs, has spent three times its budgeted amount. Illinois is 200 percent over its three-year average, and its crews have spread almost double the usual volume of salt — a mixed blessing, since it corrodes roads and bridges as it melts the snow. North Carolina planned for \$40 million and has spent \$62 million. Arkansas, where ice is often a bigger problem than snow, has spent a record \$18 million, three times its seasonal average.

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UKRAINE UNREST

Obama orders new sanctions on Russia

By JULIE PACE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Seeking to intensify pressure on Russia, President Barack Obama on Thursday expanded U.S. economic sanctions against Moscow over its actions in Ukraine, targeting President Vladimir Putin's chief of staff and 19 other individuals as well as a Russian bank that provides them support.

Obama, warning of more costs to come for the Kremlin if the situation worsens, said he also had

“The world is watching with grave concern as Russia has positioned its military in a way that could lead to further incursions into ... Ukraine.”

President Barack Obama

signed an executive order that would allow the U.S. to penalize key sectors of the Russian economy, including its huge energy business. Officials said Obama could act on that authority if Russian forces press into other areas of Ukraine, an escalation of the crisis in Crimea.

The president said the latest penalties were the result of “choices the Russian government has made, choices that have been rejected by the international community.”

“Russia must know that further escalation will only isolate it further from the international community,” Obama said, speaking from the South Lawn of the White House.

European Union leaders, too, said they would expand the number of people targeted with various sanctions and indicated they would cancel an EU-Russia summit. Chancellor Angela Merkel told the German parliament that if the crisis deepens in Crimea and Ukraine, the EU is prepared to move to economic sanctions on



ANDREW LUBIMOV/AP

A man in an unmarked uniform with a ribbon symbolizing the Soviet victory in World War II, holds a gun during seizure of the Ukrainian corvette Khmelnitsky in Sevastopol, Crimea, on Thursday. Pro-Russian crowds seized two Ukrainian warships. Shots were fired but there were no casualties as the Khmelnitsky was seized in Sevastopol. Another ship, the Luts, also was surrounded by pro-Russian forces.

a higher level.

Russia retaliated quickly by imposing entry bans on American lawmakers and senior White House officials. Among them were Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio. Obama's senior adviser Dan Pfeiffer and his deputy national security adviser, Ben Rhodes, were also targets of the Russian entry bans.

Boehner's office said the speaker was “proud to be included on a list of those willing to stand against Putin's aggression.”

The new American sanctions hit close advisers to Putin, including Sergei Ivanov, the Russian president's chief of staff and a longtime associate. Also targeted were Arkady Rotenberg and Gennady Timchenko, both lifelong Putin friends whose companies have amassed billions of dollars

in government contracts.

Also sanctioned: Bank Rossiya, a private bank that is owned by Yuri Kovalchuk, who is considered to be Putin's banker.

The U.S. sanctions followed a first round of U.S. economic penalties ordered earlier in the week on 11 people the U.S. said were involved in the dispute in Ukraine. Russia moved its military into Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula three weeks ago and has since formally annexed the strategically important region into its borders.

The U.S. has declared Russia's incursion into Crimea a violation of international law and does not recognize its annexation of the peninsula.

Still, U.S. officials privately acknowledge that Russia is unlikely to give up Crimea. Instead, their top priority is keeping Russia from moving into other areas

of Ukraine with pro-Russian populations.

“The world is watching with grave concern as Russia has positioned its military in a way that could lead to further incursions into southern and eastern Ukraine,” Obama said.

Senior administration officials said the individuals targeted by Thursday's sanctions will have assets frozen in the United States, will be barred from doing any business in the U.S. and will be unable to make transactions in American dollars. The officials said some of those sanctioned are close associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin has not been personally targeted by the first two rounds of U.S. sanctions. American sanctions on heads of state are rare, largely reserved for instances where the U.S. is seeking a change in government leadership.

Pro-Russian crowds seize 2 Ukrainian warships

By JIM HEINTZ
AND DAVID RISING
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Pro-Russian crowds seized two Ukrainian warships Thursday and Ukraine said its troops were being threatened in Crimea as the European Union considered new sanctions against Russia for its annexation of the Black Sea peninsula.

Tensions in the region remained high despite the release of a Ukrainian naval commander held by pro-Russian forces.

Shots were fired but there were no casualties as the Ukrainian corvette Khmelnitsky was seized in Sevastopol, according to an AP photographer at the scene. Another ship, the Luts, was also surrounded by pro-Russian forces.

The Defense Ministry had no immediate information on the incidents.

Ukraine's Deputy Defense Minister Leonid Polyakov accused Russian troops of constantly threatening a storm military bases where Ukrainian soldiers were located, according to the Interfax news agency.

In Geneva, Ukraine's ambassador to the United Nations warned of a sharp deterioration in relations between the two neighbors, saying that Russia appears to be preparing for a military “invasion” in more areas of his country.

Ambassador Yuri Tymoshenko said there were “indications that Russia is on its way to unleash a full-blown military invention in Ukraine's east and south” since its annexation of Crimea. He said his statement was based on information from non-governmental organizations.

In an address to the German Parliament in Berlin, Chancellor Angela Merkel said the EU was readying further sanctions and that the G-8 forum of leading economies had been suspended indefinitely. Russia holds the presidency of the G-8 and President Vladimir Putin was due to host his counterparts, including President Barack Obama, at a G-8 summit in Sochi in June.

“So long as there aren't the political circumstances, like now, for an important format like the G-8, then there is no G-8,” Merkel said. “Neither the summit, nor the format.”

The EU and the United States have slapped sanctions on individuals involved in what they say was Crimea's unlawful referendum over joining Russia. Moscow formally annexed Crimea earlier this week in the wake of the poll. The Black Sea peninsula had been part of Russia for centuries until 1954 when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev transferred it to Ukraine, and many residents were happy about rejoining Russia.

USS George H.W. Bush departs the Mediterranean



TOM WINKLER/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The French navy frigate FS Casard passes alongside the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush during an exercise in the Mediterranean Sea earlier this month.

Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush has departed the Mediterranean Sea and entered the Middle East, less than a week after the Pentagon extended its stay in European waters.

The Bush steamed through the Suez Canal on Wednesday, according to a Navy release.

Military leaders chose to keep the carrier and its strike group, with roughly 6,000 sailors, four ships and eight aircraft squadrons, in the Mediterranean several days past its scheduled departure to reassure allies amid the continuing turmoil in Ukraine.

The destroyer USS Truxtun, which is part of the carrier group,

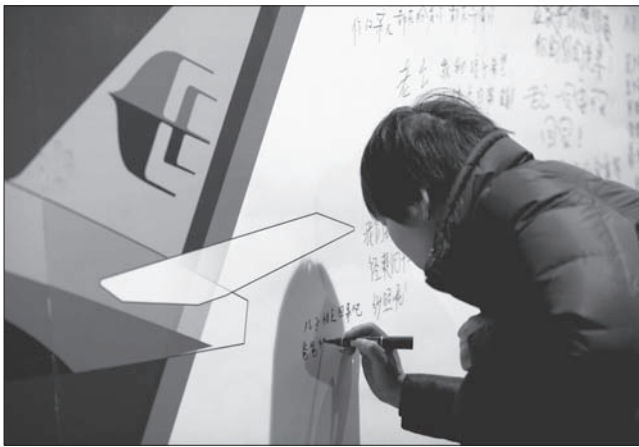
remained in the Black Sea as of Thursday, following exercises with Bulgarian and Romanian navies.

The Bush Carrier Strike Group departed Norfolk, Va., last month on what is only the carrier's second deployment. It entered the Navy's 6th Fleet waters on Feb. 24 before a scheduled transit to the Middle East.

The Bush is expected to replace the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group near the Persian Gulf. It follows the USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, which entered 5th Fleet waters last week and replaced the USS Boxer Amphibious Ready Group, which is now homeward bound.

news@stripes.com

WORLD



A woman writes a message on a board dedicated to the passengers aboard the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 at a hotel in Beijing on Thursday.

Andy Wong/AP

Search for plane shifts to site of floating objects

By SCOTT McDONALD
AND KRISTEN GELINEAU
The Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — An air search in the southern Indian Ocean for possible objects from the missing Malaysia Airlines plane described as the “best lead” so far ended for the day without success Thursday but will resume in the morning, Australian rescue officials said.

The four planes were checking to see if two large objects spotted in satellite imagery bobbing in the remote ocean were debris from Flight 370 that disappeared March 8 with 239 people on board.

One of the objects was almost 80 feet in length and the other was 15 feet. There could be other objects in the area, a four-hour flight from Australia’s southwest coast, said John Young, manager of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority’s emergency response division.

“This is a lead, it’s probably the best lead we have right now,” Young said. He cautioned that the objects could be seaborne debris along a shipping route where containers can fall off cargo vessels, although the larger object is longer than a container.

A statement from the authority said the four planes searched an area of 8,800 square miles about 1,550 miles southwest of Perth on Thursday without success. The area is about halfway between Australia and desolate islands off the Antarctic.

The search will continue on Friday, it said. It earlier said the search had been hampered by

low visibility caused by clouds and rain.

News that possible plane parts had been found marked a new phase in the emotional roller coaster for distraught relatives of the passengers, who have criticized Malaysia harshly for not releasing timely information about the plane. While they still hope their love.

Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein told a news conference Thursday that “for all the families around the world, the one piece of information that they want most is the information we just don’t have — the location of MH370.”

Malaysian officials held a meeting Thursday night with the relatives in a hotel near Kuala Lumpur, but journalists were kept away. The family members walked into the meeting with sad faces and one Malay man with two children said “no pictures please.” No details of the meeting were released. A group of officials also flew to Beijing on Thursday night to meet families there.

Young said the depth of the ocean in the latest area, which is south from where the search had been focused since Monday, is several thousand yards.

He said it may be difficult to spot the objects as they “are relatively indistinct on the imagery ... but those who are experts indicate they are credible sightings. The indication to me is of objects that are a reasonable size and probably awash with water, moving up and down over the surface.”

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority released two images of the whitish objects. They were

taken March 16, but Australian Air Commodore John McGarry said it took time to analyze them.

An Australian C-130 Hercules plane dropped marker buoys in the area to aid in the search.

But some analysts said the debris is most likely not pieces of Flight 370. “The chances of it being debris from the airplane are probably small, and the chances of it being debris from other shipping are probably large,” said Jason Middleton, an aviation professor at the University of New South Wales in Sydney.

The hunt for the Boeing 777 has been punctuated by several false leads since it disappeared above the Gulf of Thailand. But this is the first time that possible objects have been spotted since the search area was massively expanded into two corridors, one stretching from northern Thailand into Central Asia and the other from the Strait of Malacca down to southern reaches of the Indian Ocean.

The Norwegian cargo vessel Hoegh St. Petersburg was rerouted and arrived at the area in the Indian Ocean where the possible wreckage was spotted.

“They (the ship) have been asked to continue the search tomorrow and they will continue tomorrow morning,” Ingat Skiaer from Hoegh Autoliners told a news conference in Oslo.

The Norwegian ship, which transports cars, was on its way from South Africa to Australia, Skiaer said. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority said another commercial ship and an Australian navy vessel were also en route to the search area.

With leads limited, jet’s disappearance generates theories

By JOEL ACHENBACH
The Washington Post

The missing plane left behind a vapor trail of scenarios, and they have grown increasingly elaborate in the absence of information. Aviation consultants sense that this could be a 9/11 plot gone awry. Or perhaps it is a 9/11 plot brilliantly executed and still operational. And yet an accident of some kind still hasn’t been ruled out.

The crucial evidence about what happened to Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 on March 8 may be 2½ miles deep in the Indian Ocean.

One awful possibility: We’ll never know.

The lack of solid data has invited free-wheeling speculation in the news media and around water coolers everywhere. Individually, the scenarios tend to lack strong factual foundations. Collectively, they may or may not hold the answer.

“There’s still no clarity about what happened to that airplane other than the fact that it changed course and went off to points unknown,” said Sean Cassidy, an Alaska Airlines captain who is national safety coordinator for the U.S. Air Line Pilots Association.

Aviation experts are discussing many possibilities, and they include:

1) Mechanical failure: The plane could have suffered some kind of electrical fire that caused a crisis and an emergency response. This was the hypothesis in a much-discussed article on Wired.com by a pilot who argued that the pilot of Flight MH370 must have turned the aircraft around in hopes of reaching an airport for an emergency landing, only to crash somewhere at sea.

Another possibility is catastrophic decompression. The crew could have lost consciousness and the plane could have kept flying — what people have been calling the “Payne Stewart scenario,” after the golfer who died in 1999 when a Learjet underwent decompression and kept flying for more than 1,000 miles before crashing in South Dakota.

If the Malaysian plane’s diversion was pre-programmed, as some reports suggest, that would pretty much rule out an accident. The pilot never radioed any distress, and the radios rely on batteries and would still operate after an electrical fire, said Hans Weber, a San Diego-based aviation consultant.

2) Hijacking/commandeering: Technically, a hijacking comes with demands, whereas commandeering can be for a variety of malevolent or idiosyncratic purposes. But in both cases this would have been a plane intentionally diverted — for reasons unknown — from its flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

“It had enough fuel to go many places, and, unfortunately, it had enough fuel to go into places where you don’t have civil radar systems, for example, and into a part of the world where terrorism and to some extent state-supported terrorism exist,” said George Hamlin, an aviation consultant based in Fairfax, Va.

He broached the possibility that this is part of an ongoing operation akin to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks — including, perhaps, using the plane to deliver an explosive device somewhere.

3) The plane landed: Hundreds of airfields were in range of the airliner, conceivably. It’s implausible that it landed at a major commercial airport. This leads to speculation that it reached an abandoned airstrip.

4) Officials know where the jet is: Officials in charge of the investigation may know much more than they have revealed. They may have decided to withhold information to protect investigatory assets (such as satellite capabilities), to cover up a mistake or national security inadequacy (such as a lack of good radar coverage), or to avoid tipping off people of interest.

“We’re dealing with military organizations, and they don’t want to tell you, and especially they don’t want to tell you if it looks like they really screwed up,” Weber said.

5) Terrorist attempt was aborted: If hijackers seized the plane, they conceivably could have been challenged by passengers or crewmembers, as happened on United Airlines Flight 93, the hijacked jetliner that crashed in Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001. Many scenarios emerge from this one. It’s possible that hijackers intentionally crashed the plane in the remote Indian Ocean to cover the tracks of an ambitious operation that didn’t quite work, but one that could be “imputed against” some day.

Said Hamlin, “I’m not taking bets on any of the scenarios. But you have to do some out-of-the-box thinking in terms of what could have happened here.”

George Hamlin
aviation consultant based in Fairfax, Va.

‘I’m not taking bets on any of the scenarios. But you have to do some out-of-the-box thinking in terms of what could have happened here.’

WORLD



AMR NABIL/AP

An Egyptian firefighter checks a crater made by a blast at the Cairo police headquarters in downtown Cairo in January. The militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, which has waged a campaign of bombings and assassinations for months in Egypt, has quickly advanced in weaponry and sophistication of attacks.

Egypt at risk

Escalating violence could turn nation into new front for jihadi groups

By LEE KEATH

The Associated Press

CAIRO — An Islamic militant group that has waged a campaign of bombings and assassinations for months in Egypt has quickly advanced in weaponry and sophistication of attacks, drawing on the experience of Egyptians who fought in Syria's civil war.

The increasing capabilities of the group, called Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, Arabic for the Champions of Jerusalem, raises the danger that a wave of violence that began as a retaliation for the military's ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi is evolving into a new front for regional jihadi groups.

Ansar Beit al-Maqdis first arose in the Sinai Peninsula, where for years militant groups largely made of up local Bedouin had carried out attacks, lobbing rockets into neighboring Israel and at times opening fire on military and police. Attacks escalated after the 2011 fall of autocrat Hosni Mubarak, when militants turned their guns more directly against Egyptian soldiers and police. But after the July 3 coup removing Morsi, militants dramatically stepped up their campaign, and it has since spread to cities of the Nile Delta and the capital, Cairo. In recent weeks, al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri took up the cause in a recent message urging Egyptians to join the fight against the man who removed Morsi, army chief Abdel-Pattah

el-Sissi. One of al-Qaida's strongest branches, based in Yemen, praised "our mujahedeen brothers in Sinai."

Ansar Beit al-Maqdis "has rapidly become one of the most active jihadist groups in the world," the U.S.-based intelligence assessment group Startfor warned in report last week.

It said the string of messages suggested the group is getting "outside help," possibly from the Yemen branch, known as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, a former al-Qaida branch fighting in both Iraq and Syria. In a recording last month, the leader of Ansar Beit al-Maqdis Abu Osama al-Masri saluted the Islamic State, a sign of its influence with his group.

The group is also benefiting from Egyptian militants returning from fronts of jihad, or holy war, elsewhere around the region. After a failed attempt to assassinate Interior Minister Mohammed Ibrahim in Cairo in September, the group identified the suicide bomber as Walid Badr, a former Egyptian army major who it said had fought in Afghanistan after the U.S.-led invasion in 2001 and later in Syria's civil war. In a separate statement, it said another militant, Saeed el-Shahat, an Egyptian who also fought in Syria, blew himself up when police raided his apartment in January.

Further alarm was raised over Ansar Beit al-Maqdis' capabilities when it downed a military helicop-



AHMED ASHRAF/AP

Egyptian policemen guard the scene of a powerful explosion at a police headquarters building that killed at least a dozen people, wounded more than 100 and left scores buried under rubble in Mansoura, 70 miles north of Cairo, Egypt, in December.

ter in Sinai in late January, killing all five crewmembers. Based on a video by the group purporting to show the attack, the fighters used a shoulder-fired missile from the Russian-made Igla series, which is more advanced than weapons systems previously seen among militant groups, the London-based military analysis group Jane's Defense Weekly reported.

Last week, militants assassinated a senior interior ministry aide with a single shot through the neck as he sat in his car, security officials said, a sign of an experienced sniper. Days earlier, they set up a powerful truck bomb outside Cairo's main security di-

rectorate, timed during a change in shifts, killing five people in the center of the capital. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press.

The growth in the group's campaign adds a further layer of turmoil as security forces wage a fierce crackdown on Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood and its Islamist allies, which have continued protests demanding his reinstatement. Police assaults on protests have killed hundreds of Morsi supporters and thousands more have been arrested, including Morsi and most of the Brotherhood's leadership,

who now face a series of trials.

The government alleges the Brotherhood has been behind the militant campaign from the start, accusing its leaders of working with militants to launch the insurgency. In December, it declared the Brotherhood a terrorist organization. The Brotherhood, which officially renounced violence in the 1970s, denies the accusation and calls it a pretext to wipe out the government's top political rival, which won a string of elections after Mubarak's fall.

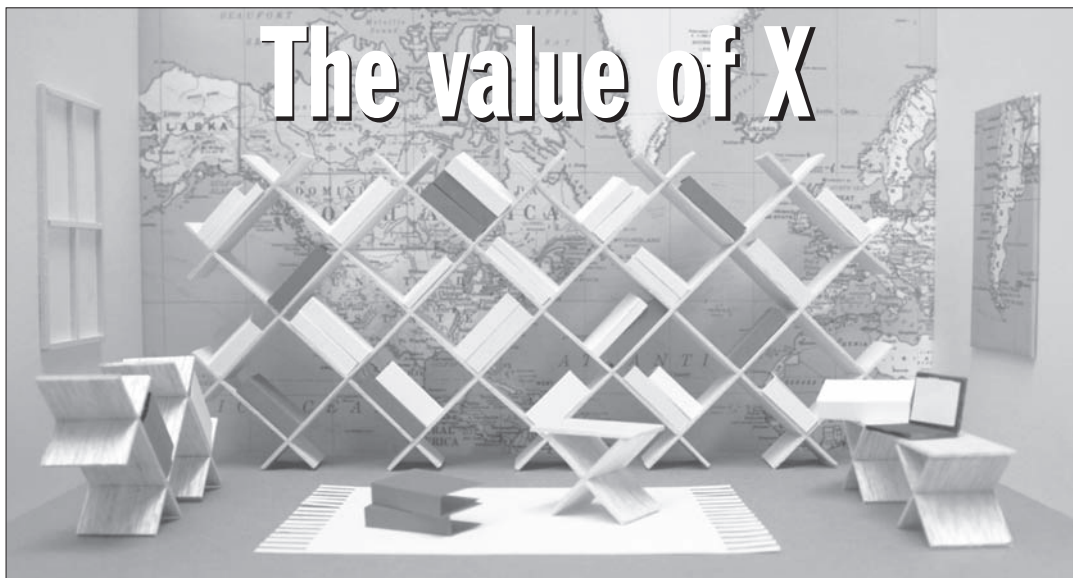
Egypt's security agencies say they have amassed evidence of the Brotherhood's role. But so far it largely has not been made public, nor has it been put through judicial scrutiny. Instead, their purported evidence has come out in a flow of leaks to the Egyptian press by anonymous officials — making its veracity impossible to assess independently.

In December, for example, officials in the prosecutors' office leaked to the Egyptian press the purported confessions of Mohammed el-Zawahiri, the brother of al-Qaida's leader who is himself a prominent figure in extremist circles and was a strong supporter of Morsi's presidency. He was arrested soon after Morsi's ouster.

According to the leaks, he told interrogators that the Brotherhood's deputy leader Khairat el-Shater gave him millions of dollars to buy weapons from Libya for Sinai militants and demanded they attack the military and government institutions.

NATION

The value of X



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PROJECT H DESIGN/Slate

A new library at REALM Charter School in Berkeley, Calif., will be carved out of an existing room in a commercial building. Designed and built by eighth-grade students, it is centered on the concept of X-shaped modules that will create everything from bookshelves to seating.

Eighth-graders design and build a school library for the 21st century

By KRISTIN HOHENADEL
Slate

There's an empty room at the REALM Charter School, which opened three years ago in an existing commercial building in Berkeley, Calif. When Emily Pilloton, director of the school's Studio H design and build class, and Hallie Chen, an eighth-grade teacher, asked students what they envisioned for the space, they had plenty of ideas.

"When we asked them, 'what do you want out of your school,' they didn't use the word 'library,'" Pilloton said in a phone interview. "They said they wanted a space to relax and read and discover. They said 'I want to learn how microphones work,' 'I want to learn how ostriches make their nests,' 'I want to learn how to make video games,' or 'I want to learn better English.' All these questions about exploration and finding things you don't know."

Pilloton's Studio H program, which teaches kids hands-on design and building skills, has previously empowered high-school students in Bertie County, N.C., to build a community farmer's market, earning them the key to the city. Now based at REALM, where she recently started a design-and-building camp for girls, Pilloton is helping lead 108 eighth-graders on a mission to design and build a 21st-century school library.

To get started, they took a field trip to the new public library half a mile from their school.

"It's a beautiful library; a bunch



REALM Charter School students assemble X-shaped units made of precision-cut plywood that will form the base of shelving, furniture, fixtures and more.

of stacks and tables, but it's what you would expect," Pilloton said. "So we said 'This doesn't have to look like a library; it doesn't even have to look like a library.' I'm sort of an old fogey in this regard, I love books and I think kids should have thousands of books around them. But in the same way that our classroom has old-school chisels and wood planes and a laser cutter right next to each other, I think our space should have old papyrus scripts next to iPads. And our students should feel comfortable walking in there and seeing those two things as of the same value."

Pilloton and Chen said they looked for a design strategy that would be both manageable for eighth-graders and logistically possible for 108 students to collaborate on equally. They decided on a building block model,

in which the crux of the student design work goes into conceiving of one basic module, which, like a Lego brick, then can form the basis of everything in the space, from bookshelves to tables, seating and light fixtures.

"We thought that was a metaphor for our students," Pilloton said. "They're greater as a whole but individually have their place in it."

They eventually decided to use an X as the building block and are calling their newfangled library the X-Space.

"They're all taking prealgebra right now, so they all know that X is the unknown," Pilloton said, "X can be anything. You go into this space and explore and find new things, whether that's in a book or on a laptop or through a project you're

'When we asked them, 'what do you want out of your school,' they didn't use the word 'library,' They said they wanted a space to relax and read and discover.'

Emily Pilloton

Director of the design and build class at REALM Charter School in Berkeley, Calif.

doing with your classmates." The individual units, which they are calling STAX, are made of 13-ply finished plywood. Carl Bass, CEO of Autodesk, helped them to work out the details of the design to make sure the modules would be stable enough to support the weight of books. He volunteered his high-precision computer numerical controlled (CNC) cutting machine to ensure that each module would be identical, cutting the pieces needed to make the STAX units himself in his private shop nearby.

"Most bookshelves are horizontal," Pilloton said. In the X-Space, "all the books will be at 45 degree angles. So you have to engage with the shelf in a way that forces you to weave through some books that maybe you're not even looking for but maybe along the way you find out why ostriches build their nests."

It seems noteworthy that the library project is the last space to be built out in the school, which probably wouldn't have been the case even 20 years ago. Not to mention that the school has run out of funds for renovation. So to

raise the \$75,000 needed to build and equip the X-Space, Pilloton and her students have launched a Kickstarter campaign that they hope will fund books, construction materials, lighting, fixtures, hardware, technology, software, subscriptions, periodicals and e-books for the X-Space.



Berkeley, Calif., eighth-graders decided to use an X as their modular building block and are calling their newfangled library the X-Space.

FAITH

Popular pontiff

Catholics reflect on first year of 'people's pope'

By LORNET TURNBULL
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE

In November, the priest at Assumption Catholic Church in North Seattle mailed a letter of welcome to parishioners, including members long dormant — those divorced and remarried, gay, tired or simply disillusioned.

"We are living in exciting times," Father Oliver Duggan told them. "Our church, which so many had written off as not relevant in this time and age, has suddenly come to life."

For this he credited Pope Francis for not only inspiring his own pastoral work but for breathing new life into the Roman Catholic Church. While the new pontiff hasn't changed church teachings, the father wrote, "he has been applying those teachings in a loving and caring way."

A year after Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio stepped onto the balcony at St. Peter's Basilica to present himself to the world as Pope Francis, Duggan's words stand as testament for many — Catholics and non-Catholics — who believe this "people's pope" has shifted the tone and softened the image of the 1.2 billion-member church.

To be sure, the pontiff's actions and remarks in his inaugural year — from challenging trickle-down economic theories, to reforming Vatican bureaucracy to urging church leaders to stop their obsessions over hot-button social issues — have done nothing to change doctrine.

Francis still says "no," but in a kinder, gentler way, to some of the church's more complicated and thorny issues around reproductive rights, sexuality, married priests and women's role in the church — issues especially polarizing in the American Catholic church.

Just last week, while still maintaining the church's firm position on marriage, he called on its leaders to explore how civil unions might provide health-care and economic benefits for same-sex couples.

"I don't believe he will change doctrine; that won't happen," said Sharon Hanses, 79, a lifelong Catholic and member of St. Paul Cathedral in Yakima, Wash.

"But I do believe he's changing hearts."

Almost from the start, the Argentine and first Jesuit pope grabbed the world's attention for being the most relatable in modern history: tooling around Vatican City in a 30-year-old Renault, washing the feet of female convicts, posing for selfies with visitors to the Vatican.

Francis eschewed the spacious apartments of his predecessors to live instead in a small suite in a Vatican guesthouse.

Named Time Magazine's Man of the Year in 2013, as well as Man of the Year for the LGBT magazine The Advocate, he is hailed as the most influential world leader on Twitter with more than 3.7 million followers and is the most talked-about person on the Internet.

The first non-European pope in more than 1,200 years, Francis has made strong pronouncements about income inequality and treatment of the poor, and in his homily at a Mass on Ash Wednesday, said the



JOHN LOK, SEATTLE TIMES/MCT

Stephen Dofelmier, left, returned to Assumption Catholic Church in North Seattle after receiving a letter from Father Oliver Duggan, right, who was inspired by Pope Francis' conciliatory tone and invited dormant parishioners back.

best way to give was to not expect anything in return.

He has spoken out against careerism in the church and the Vatican, and called for a "synod on the Family" this fall after ordering a survey of Catholics on a range of social issues — from same-sex marriage and unwed cohabitation to contraception, and the place of divorced and remarried people in the church.

Perhaps the most quoted words of his papacy, "Who am I to judge?" have given hope to gay Catholics alienated by the church and became the rallying cry for students at a Catholic school in Sammamish, Wash., who saw injustice in the December firing of their gay vice principal after he married his husband.

"Personally, I think he's a saint," said Stephen Dofelmier of the pope. Dofelmier grew up in the church, left after getting a divorce but returned to Assumption after receiving one of Father Duggan's "welcome back" letters.

Even after his first marriage was annulled by the church and his second marriage recognized by the church 10 years ago, Dofelmier said he still didn't feel comfortable going back, given the continued hard line on a range of matters.

Duggan's letter, he said, re-energized him and allowed him to see that change was possible — not just in liturgy but around the idea of being a good Christian. "I feel like I'm coming back to a kinder church," Dofelmier said. "I admire this pope, particularly his humanness."

Yet for all the good feelings Francis' papacy is generating — from within the halls of the nation's Catholic schools to Catholic-run charities — some say the pope has failed to fully address some of the deep conflicts within the church.

The new pope, they say, has rarely spoken about priest sex abuse, and three months after Francis created a commission of experts to study the best ways to protect children, no members have been appointed and no action taken.

In an interview with an Italian daily last week, Francis struck back, insisting that despite its transparency and responsibility, the church has repeatedly been criticized.

While his polling numbers far surpass those of the church he leads, in some cases reaching levels that would make him the envy of politicians, none of it appears to be bringing members back to the pews, according to a recent Pew Research Center report.

John Schuster is a former priest who lives in Port Orchard, Wash., and heads a chapter of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP); he still meets with victims today.

"He's pretty much a PR pope," Schuster said. "His hype and all his nice words are not matching his actions. He's starting to show cracks in his message, and people are going to hold him accountable."

Others prefer to believe that Francis is laying the foundation for changes yet to come, including his recent appointment of 19 new cardinals — his closest advisers in shaping church policy — all from throughout the developing world.

Pope Francis
AP

Named Time Magazine's Man of the Year in 2013, as well as Man of the Year for the LGBT magazine The Advocate, he is hailed as the most influential world leader on Twitter with more than 3.7 million followers and is the most talked-about person on the Internet.

WORLD

Suicide attack in Baghdad cafe kills 12

By SINAN SALAHEDDIN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A suicide bomber struck inside a Baghdad cafe overnight where customers were watching a soccer game on TV, killing at least 12 people and wounding 38, Iraqi officials said Thursday.

The attack in the western Washash neighborhood took place late on Wednesday night, two police officers said.

The bomber had mingled with the cafe crowd and set off his explosives-laden belt as they watched the game.

A medical official confirmed the casualty figures. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to talk to the media.

Iraq has been struck by a surge in violence unseen since 2007, relentless attacks that have become the Shiite-led government's most serious

challenge.

Violence has spiked since last April, when security forces cracked down on a Sunni protest camp north of Baghdad in clashes that left 45 dead.

Scores of people have been killed in the Iraqi capital, in recent attacks that have targeted busy areas, restaurants and other public places.

On Tuesday, a series of bombings struck both commercial streets and security forces in Baghdad and its surroundings, killing 15 people.

No one has claimed responsibility for the latest attacks, but they bear the hallmarks of an al-Qaida breakaway group that frequently uses car bombs and suicide attacks to target public areas such as cafes, restaurants, mosques and markets to undermine the government's efforts to maintain security in the country.

According to the U.N., 8,868 people were killed in Iraq last year — the country's highest death toll since a peak of sectarian bloodletting in 2007.



JADER AL-HELO/AP

An Iraqi policeman uses a bomb detection device to examine a flag-draped coffin during a funeral procession in the Shiite holy city of Najaf, 100 miles south of Baghdad, on Thursday.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

County says toilets in tree are not art

CO COLORADO SPRINGS — El Paso County Code Enforcement officers are agreeing with neighbors who say several toilets hanging from a tree in a community near Colorado Springs are not art.

El Paso County Code Enforcement Officer Gayle Jackson is disputing claims by an unidentified homeowner who says the toilets are works of art and will be used as bird feeders. The man said he will take the commodes down, but he still plans to keep them on his property. So far, no citations have been issued.

According to KRDO-TV, the county says the rubbish ordinance is designed to protect the public health, safety and welfare of citizens by eliminating and controlling rubbish in the county, which can also hurt the community's image.

Restrictions sought on lottery winnings

MA BOSTON — State Treasurer Steven Grossman has offered legislative leaders help in crafting a law to bar lottery winners from using their windfall to commit crimes.

The Boston Herald reported that Grossman's offer comes days after police say a convicted sex offender who won a \$10 million lottery prize used winnings to gain the trust of a boy he allegedly molested, then to buy his silence.

Grossman's letter to Senate President Theresa Murray and House Speaker Robert DeLeo said such a bill should bar lottery winners from using prizes "to support criminal activities or threaten the safety and well-being of others."

DeLeo's spokesman said he received Grossman's letter and "will consider options moving forward."

Man arrested after exceeding talking limit

MI BRIDGEPORT-TOWNSHIP — A Michigan man has been arrested after authorities say he refused to stop talking past a three-minute time limit for public comment at a township board meeting.

Adam Adams was arraigned Friday in Saginaw District Court on a felony charge of resisting and obstructing a police officer and a misdemeanor count of disturbing the peace.

Adams was arrested at the March 4 meeting by three Bridgeport Township police officers. Authorities said he refused to stop talking when township officials told him to do so.

The resisting and obstructing charge carries a maximum penalty of two years behind bars.

Zoo rethinking polices after free-day fights

MO KANSAS CITY — Kansas City Zoo officials say they will review their policies after a number of fights broke out during a free day at the



SUE BEYER, THE EXPRESS-TIMES (LEHIGH VALLEY, PA.)/AP

Spring break busted

Students at Northampton Community College walk past an island drink station set up by dining services at the Bethlehem, Pa. school. The students are protesting the cancellation of spring break by wearing flip-flops, bathing suits and tank tops to class. Protest organizer John Cronce, 20, was a bit disappointed in the turnout of about 15 people. "Most of the campus is looking at us like we're nuts," Cronce said. "It would be nice if there were more girls."

zoo, punctuated by shots fired near the parking lot as police tried to get the mayhem under control.

The Kansas City Star reported there were no gunshot injuries Tuesday, but witnesses said they feared for their lives as chaos broke out around them as they were trying to leave.

The zoo offers four free days a year as part of a promise to voters in Clay and Jackson counties in return for approving a one-eighth-cent zoo sales tax in 2011. Similar fights broke out last year during a free day in April, prompting the zoo to move the events from weekends to Tuesdays this year.

Garfield toy deemed partial cause of wreck

NJ TRENTON — The estate of a New Jersey woman injured by a car has been awarded damages after a jury determined that a stuffed animal hanging from the driver's rearview mirror contributed to the accident.

The Times of Trenton reported the jury awarded Ellen Henkle's estate \$378,000 on Monday after finding that the driver that struck her was negligent in part, due to a Garfield stuffed animal block-

ing his vision.

Henkle, who lived in Hamilton and was 52 at the time of the accident, required multiple surgeries and was disabled from the March 9, 2006 crash.

She died four years later of natural causes.

Hamilton resident Thomas Hill struck Henkle with his vehicle while making a lane change.

Sheriff: Person drowns while riding horse

OK CHICKASHA — Authorities in Grady County are investigating after a person drowned while riding a horse.

According to Oklahoma City television station KOKH, witnesses told police that a person rode a horse into a pond and both went underwater.

The witnesses said the horse came back up but the rider never surfaced. A dive team discovered the victim's body later Tuesday.

Authorities have not yet released the victim's name.

Couple save falling toddler with mattress

CA LOS ANGELES — The couple who saved a 3-

year-old boy just as he tumbled out of a third-story window in Burbank, Calif., described the harrowing split-second actions that cushioned his fall.

Konrad Lightner and his wife, Jennifer, were carrying their box-spring mattress out Sunday when they saw the toddler throw his leg over the window sill, his toys tumbled to the ground below.

"Once we saw that his leg was going over the window, Jenny called police," Konrad said in an interview with KTLA-TV.

After the boy got out, he clung to a telephone wire outside the window, spurring a split-second decision by the Lightners to position their box spring mattress below.

"He started crying, and I knew he couldn't make it back to the window, so I just started getting ready for him to let go," Konrad Lightner said. Forty seconds later the boy let go of the wire and fell about 30 feet into the arms of Lightner, who used the mattress as a point of landing pad.

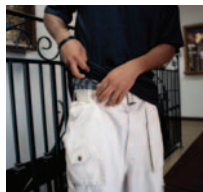
The toddler's mother, Morgane Milligan, told KTLA that he had apparently pushed out the window screen and "decided it was really fun to throw toys out there." He did not suffer any major injuries.

THE CENSUS

\$50

The fine for a first-offense conviction for wearing sagging pants

under an ordinance approved Tuesday by the Iberville Parish Council in Louisiana. The ordinance was drawn up in response to complaints from residents about the practice — what some young people call a fashion — and is being viewed as a safety issue. "For instance, if somebody asks somebody to pull their pants up and it starts an argument or a fight, it can get out of hand," council member Louis Kelley said. "Now they can call the Sheriff's Office and they can handle it. You don't have to get into a shouting match."



From wire reports

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FACES

‘Divergent’ star likes to hug it out

By NICOLE EVATT
The Associated Press

Shaileene Woodley is known for her hugs. The 22-year-old ‘Divergent’ star gives hearty embraces — often more than one — to everyone she meets.

“It’s very disarming,” said co-star Theo James in a recent interview. “She (first) hugged me at our test. Yeah, she’s a big hugger.”

It’s not just her co-stars who feel the love. Woodley also hugs nearly every journalist she meets during interviews or on a red carpet.

Woodley and James star in the anticipated first film adaptation of the young adult trilogy by author Veronica Roth.

“Divergent” follows 16-year-old Tris (Woodley) as she finds her place in a future dystopian society where people are separated into groups based on their virtues.

Ashley Judd and Tony Goldwyn play Tris’ parents in the film, now in theaters.

Judd said she and Woodley have their own special, two-sided squeeze so they “both get heart.”

“It was about 6 o’clock in the morning on my first day of work,” recalled Goldwyn of his first Woodley hug. “We were driving over together and she leapt out and gave me a long hug. I was like ‘wow.’”

Unfortunately for “Divergent” actor Ansel Elgort, his first encounter did not go as well.

“My first Shaileene hug was when I met her for the audition, and I was taken by surprise,” Elgort said. “I thought maybe she knew me or something, or, I don’t know, and I didn’t really hug her back, really. I was like, ‘oh hey,’ and gave her a couple pats and said, ‘it was nice to meet you.’ And to this day she tells me that she wasn’t sure she’s going to like me or not because I didn’t hug her back. She thought I might not be a real grounded person.”

Was Elgort able to make amends?

“Yeah, now when I see her I make sure every time to give her a very long, truthful hug,” he said.



Kate Winslet, left, and Shailene Woodley arrive at the premiere of “Divergent” in Los Angeles on Tuesday. Woodley is notorious for hugging.

JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

Coldplay’s Chris Martin to help on ‘The Voice’

Coldplay singer Chris Martin is bringing his expertise to NBC’s music competition show “The Voice.”

The network said Martin will participate in the “battles” round that begins March 31, advising singers on vocal technique and stage presence. The singers are vying for the attention of their team coaches, who must decide who gets to move on in the show.

“The Voice” has established itself this season as the most popular of the music shows, eclipsing the long-running champ “American Idol” on Fox.

The guest role is good promotion for Martin and Coldplay, which is releasing a new album in May.



Chris Martin

Other news

■ Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda will be clocking in together once again. The actresses, who co-starred in the classic 1980 workplace comedy “9 to 5,” will team up again in “Grace and Frankie,” a new single-camera sitcom for Netflix. It will have 13 half-hour episodes.

■ “The Last of Us” won the top honor at the Game Developers Choice Awards. The post-apocalyptic survival saga created by developer Naughty Dog for the PlayStation 3 picked up the game of the year trophy Wednesday at the 14th annual ceremony. “The Last of Us” also won the awards for best design and narrative. Other winners included “Grand Theft Auto V” for best technology, “The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds” for best handheld game and “Gone Home” for best debut.

■ An attorney for Tyler, The Creator says the Odd Future rapper did not incite a riot at a show during South By Southwest last week and would not deliberately put fans at risk. Tyler was arrested Saturday at the airport as he left Austin, Texas, after police issued a warrant. Police say he was charged with misdemeanor riot and alleged he incited a crowd of fans to storm the entrance to the club where he was performing.

■ Emmylou Harris has reached a deal with Penguin imprint Blue Rider Press to write a yet-untitled book, aimed for publication in the fall of 2015. It’s the first book for the Country Music Hall of Fame member. Harris also is re-releasing her 1996 album “Wrecking Ball” on April 8 as a three-disc set with new material and a DVD.

■ The New York City medical examiner has ruled the death of fashion designer L’Wren Scott a suicide. An autopsy completed Wednesday on the body of 49-year-old Scott found that she died of hanging.

From wire reports

Sons unite to create new Roy Orbison song

By CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

Roy Orbison’s three sons are all musicians but never really got to play music with their dad — until now.

Wesley, Roy Jr. and Alex Orbison have helped create a new song by their father that will appear on the 25th anniversary reissue and expansion of Orbison’s final album, “Mystery Girl.”

They found an old vocal track for a song called “The Way Is Love” originally recorded on a boombox and were able to reclaim it using technology that had to be created to accomplish the work.

They then added new instrumentation with the help of another son of a music legend, co-producer John Carter Cash.

“It really brought us closer together in a lot of ways,” said Alex Orbison, 38, who contributed



AP

When music legend Roy Orbison was honored with a star posthumously on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2010, family members — from left, sons Wesley, Alex, wife Barbara Orbison, and Roy Jr. — turned out. Orbison’s sons — all musicians — have crafted a song from an old vocal track by their father.

drums and backing vocals to the track.

“We were able to finish it up

and get it out by Father’s Day, too, which was obviously special to us.”

“Mystery Girl” will be re-released May 20 with “The Way Is Love,” one of nine previously unheard songs. Alex Orbison also directed a documentary.

Roy Orbison was going through a career renaissance at the time he released “Mystery Girl.” The “Oh, Pretty Woman” singer had just earned a new round of attention working with Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Jeff Lynne and Tom Petty in The Travelling Wilburys and was excited about the new album.

It included contributions from Lynne, Petty and most of his Heartbreakers, Bono and the Edge of U2, Elvis Costello and many other friends. His wife, Barbara, acted as his manager at the time and even sang backup on the album. Wesley Orbison wrote a song as well.

Roy Orbison died two months before its release in February 1989 at age 52.

NATION

LOOK MA, NO HANDS!

NO PAPER NECESSARY: HIGH-TECH TOILETS DO IT ALL FOR YOU

By KATHERINE ROTH
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Every so often a revolution transforms something truly basic, rendering the status quo somewhat, well, primitive.

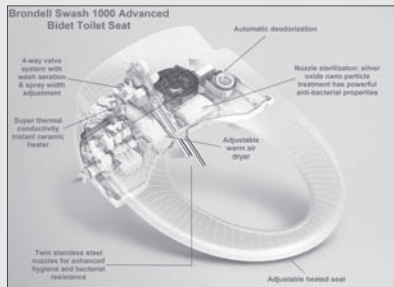
First came covered sewers, then indoor plumbing and flush toilets. Now, one bathroom at a time, another major shift in toilet hygiene is quietly underway. A new generation of toilets may one day make toilet paper — and the need to put one's hands anywhere near the unspeakable — seem like chamber pots and outhouses: outdated and somewhat messy throwbacks reserved for camping trips.

Unlike traditional toilets, the high-tech version washes from behind and — if desired — in front with water. Better models allow for temperature, direction and pressure control, and have retractable spritzing wands and automatic driers as well. The best feature warm seats, automatic motion sensors to raise the lid, buttons to raise the seat, nightlights, self-cleaning mechanisms, music to mask unpleasant sounds, deodorizer spritzers and other conveniences.

"Paper just distributes the problem," said Lenora Campos, a spokeswoman for Georgia-based Toto USA. Toto, the Japanese company that pioneered the modern electronic toilet seat, has sold 34 million of them globally. "We wash most things with water and wouldn't dream of wiping a dish or anything else with a piece of paper and calling it clean. So why should personal hygiene be any different?"

Toto began marketing the Washlet in Japan in 1980. Now 74 percent of Japanese households have toilets of the high-tech persuasion, making them more common there than home computers.

The concept of electronic toilets that



AP photos

Above: A rendering is shown of Brondell's award-winning Swash 1000 Advanced Bidet Toilet Seat.



Japanese company Toto is the maker of high-tech toilets such as the Washlet S350, left, and the NEOREST 700, right.



cleanse with water — widely known as bidet toilets or Washlets — has spread internationally over time, and dozens of companies around the world, including Inax, Brondell and Kohler, are producing them.

"We bugged Home Depot and other

stores for seven or eight years before they finally agreed to carry bidet toilets," said Steve Scheer, president of Brondell, a company that has been making high-tech models like the Swash toilet seat since 2003.

Toto's top-of-the-line Neorest toilet,

a tankless wonder with all the gizmos, comes out this fall priced at around \$10,000. Most high-tech seats with important features such as a retractable wand and a drier cost between \$450 and \$1,800, and some basic water-cleansing models made by lesser-known companies now sell for less than \$40.

"It's a very experience-driven product, and is hard to explain to someone who's never tried a high-tech toilet.

'It's ... hard to explain to someone who's never tried a high-tech toilet. But the taboo is definitely beginning to lift.'

Steve Scheer
president of
toilet-maker
Brondell

But the taboo is definitely beginning to lift," Scheer said.

There are roughly 1.5 million high-tech seats in use in the United States, and millions more featuring more basic, non-electric, water-cleansing methods such as attachments and sprayers.

Toilets at Google's California campus have been equipped with high-tech Toto seats, according to the company. And Brondell's Swash 1000 will be a standard option on Gulfstream's new G650 jets, Scheer said.

So far, the seats seem most popular in larger cities on the East and West coasts, and in areas with large Hispanic populations. They seem to be gaining ground quickly among baby boomers and those who care for the elderly, as well as those interested in environmentally friendly products.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Toyota fined \$1.2B, admits deception

By DANIELLE DOUGLAS
AND MICHAEL A. FLETCHER
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Toyota Motor lied to regulators, Congress and the public for years about the sudden acceleration of its vehicles, a deception that caused the world's largest automaker on Wednesday to be hit with a \$1.2 billion Justice Department fine.

Prosecutors say Toyota's efforts to conceal the problem and

to protect its corporate image led to a series of fatalities that could have been prevented. The settlement is being called the largest criminal penalty imposed on a car company in U.S. history.

Toyota said in the settlement that it misled Americans by making deceptive statements about the safety problems that caused its vehicles to speed up uncontrollably, a stark admission for a company that has built its brand on safety and reliability.

Early on, Toyota suggested that driver error was to blame, saying that some people may have hit the brake. Even after issuing recalls to address problematic floor mats that in some cases pinned down accelerators, the company had a flawed gas pedal design that it knew did the same thing, according to documents accompanying the agreement.

The deal is a victory for the government and could serve as a

model for a case against General Motors, which is under investigation by Congress, safety regulators and federal prosecutors for taking more than a decade to issue a recall for an ignition-switch problem it has linked to 31 accidents and 12 deaths.

"Companies that make inherently dangerous products must be maximally transparent, not two-faced," said Preet Bharara, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York.

EXCHANGE RATES

| Military rates | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Euro costs (March 21) | \$1.4152 |
| Dollar buys (March 21) | 69.7066 |
| British pound (March 21) | \$1.69 |
| Japanese yen (March 21) | 99.00 |
| South Korean won (March 21) | 1,047.00 |
| Commercial rates | |
| Bahrain (Dinar) | 0.3771 |
| British pound | \$1.6487/6.6065 |
| Canada (dollar) | 1.1269 |
| China (Yuan) | 6.2277 |
| Denmark (Krone) | 6.4560 |
| Egypt (Pound) | 6.9618 |
| Euro | \$1.3752/0.7271 |
| Hong Kong (Dollar) | 7.7539 |
| Hungary (Forint) | 226.94 |
| Israel (Shekel) | 3.4821 |
| Japan (Yen) | 99.00 |
| Kuwait (Dinar) | 0.2816 |
| Norway (Krone) | 5.0862 |
| Philippines (Peso) | 45.31 |
| Poland (Zloty) | 3.05 |
| Saudi Arabia (Riyal) | 3.7503 |
| Singapore (Dollar) | 1.2773 |
| South Korea (Won) | 1,082.12 |
| Switzerland (Franc) | 0.8854 |
| Thailand (Baht) | 32.43 |
| Turkey (New Lira) | 2.2340 |

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to the dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Prime rate | 3.25 |
| Discount rate | 0.08 |
| Federal funds market rate | 0.08 |
| 3-month bill | 0.05 |
| 30-year bond | 3.66 |

EUROPE GAS PRICES

| Country | Super E10 | Super unleaded | Super plus | Diesel |
|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Germany | \$3.784 | \$3.947 | \$4.108 | \$4.240 |
| Change in price | +3.5 cents | +3.6 cents | +3.6 cents | -1.8 cents |
| Netherlands | -- | +4.738 | \$5.035 | \$5.042 |
| Change in price | -- | -6.7 cents | -7.1 cents | -7.1 cents |
| U.K. | -- | \$3.882 | \$4.043 | \$4.175 |
| Change in price | -- | +3.6 cents | +3.6 cents | +1.8 cents |
| Azores | -- | -- | \$4.482 | -- |
| Change in price | -- | -- | no change | no change |
| U.K. | -- | \$3.929 | \$4.099 | \$4.266 |
| Change in price | -- | no change | no change | no change |
| Turkey | -- | -- | \$4.445 | \$4.108* |
| Change in price | -- | -- | no change | +1.8 cents |
| Italy | \$3.989 | -- | -- | \$4.229 |
| Change in price | no change | -- | -- | no change |

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

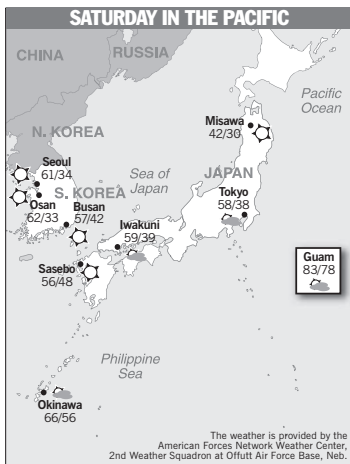
| Country | Unleaded | Super unleaded | Super plus | Diesel |
|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Japan | -- | \$3.668 | -- | \$3.999 |
| Change in price | -- | +3.0 cents | -- | -2.0 cents |
| Okinawa | \$3.539 | -- | -- | \$3.999 |
| Change in price | +3.0 cents | -- | -- | +2.0 cents |
| South Korea | \$3.799 | \$4.129 | \$4.279 | -- |
| Change in price | +3.0 cents | +4.0 cents | +2.0 cents | -- |
| Guam | \$3.749** | \$3.959 | \$4.119 | -- |
| Change in price | +4.0 cents | +4.0 cents | +4.1 cents | -- |

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of March 22-28

MARKET WATCH

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| March 19, 2014 | |
| Dow Jones Industrials | -114.02 |
| | 16,222.17 |
| Nasdaq composite | -25.71 |
| | 4,307.60 |
| Standard & Poor's 500 | -11.48 |
| | 1,860.77 |
| Russell 2000 | -9.38 |
| | 1,195.86 |

WEATHER OUTLOOK



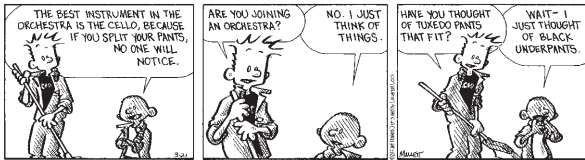
The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Friday's US temperatures

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|-------|------------------|----|----|-------|----------------------|----|----|-------|----------------|----|----|-------|
| City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | City | Hi | Lo | Wthr |
| Ablene, Tex | 84 | 50 | Cir | Chatanooga | 73 | 38 | Cir | Fort Wayne | 57 | 32 | PCldy | Louisville | 68 | 40 | PCldy |
| Akron, Ohio | 51 | 27 | Cldy | Cheney | 39 | 24 | PCldy | Fresno | 78 | 54 | PCldy | Lubbock | 82 | 46 | Cir |
| Albany, N.Y. | 40 | 29 | PCldy | Chicago | 58 | 34 | Cldy | Goodland | 51 | 29 | Cir | Macon | 73 | 34 | Cir |
| Albuquerque | 69 | 39 | Cir | Cincinnati | 64 | 35 | Cldy | Grand Junction | 61 | 31 | Rain | Madison | 50 | 30 | Cldy |
| Allentown, Pa. | 50 | 28 | Cir | Cleveland | 49 | 27 | Cldy | Grand Rapids | 48 | 24 | Cldy | Medford | 62 | 30 | Cir |
| Amarillo | 69 | 39 | Cir | Colorado Springs | 51 | 30 | PCldy | Great Falls | 24 | 15 | Cldy | Melbourne | 73 | 45 | Cir |
| Anchorage | 31 | 17 | Cir | Columbia, S.C. | 73 | 39 | Cir | Greensboro, N.C. | 67 | 36 | PCldy | Midland-Odessa | 86 | 52 | Cir |
| Asheville | 65 | 31 | Cir | Columbus, Ga. | 60 | 33 | Cldy | Hartford | 53 | 30 | PCldy | Milwaukee | 47 | 30 | Cldy |
| Atlanta | 70 | 42 | Cir | Concord, N.H. | 41 | 25 | PCldy | Hartford Springfield | 50 | 21 | Cir | Mpls-St Paul | 63 | 29 | Cldy |
| Atlantic City | 53 | 30 | Cir | Cornhusk | 77 | 59 | Cldy | Helena | 30 | 21 | Cldy | Missoula | 39 | 22 | Cldy |
| Austin | 80 | 52 | Cir | Dallas-Ft Worth | 75 | 52 | Cldy | Honolulu | 81 | 72 | PCldy | Mobile | 77 | 50 | Cir |
| Baltimore | 56 | 32 | PCldy | Dayton | 61 | 33 | Cldy | Houston | 75 | 52 | Cldy | Montgomery | 75 | 42 | Cir |
| Baton Rouge | 77 | 49 | PCldy | Denver | 76 | 56 | PCldy | Huntsville | 72 | 38 | PCldy | Nashville | 73 | 39 | Cir |
| Bilings | 32 | 25 | Cldy | Des Moines | 56 | 38 | Cir | Indianapolis | 63 | 38 | PCldy | New Orleans | 74 | 53 | PCldy |
| Birmingham | 72 | 40 | Cir | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | New York City | 51 | 33 | Cir |
| Bismarck | 34 | 28 | Snow | Elkins | 55 | 28 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Newark | 52 | 31 | Cir |
| Boise | 59 | 25 | Cir | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Norfolk, Va. | 63 | 41 | Cir |
| Boston | 45 | 32 | PCldy | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Norfolk, Va. | 63 | 41 | Cir |
| Bridgeport | 50 | 30 | Cir | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | North Platte | 53 | 27 | PCldy |
| Brownsville | 81 | 60 | Cldy | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Okahoma City | 77 | 50 | Cir |
| Buffalo | 39 | 25 | PCldy | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Omaha | 54 | 35 | Cir |
| Burlington, Vt. | 37 | 31 | Cir | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Orlando | 82 | 59 | PCldy |
| Caribou, Maine | 35 | 25 | PCldy | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Paducah | 69 | 40 | Cir |
| Charleston, W.Va. | 35 | 19 | Cldy | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Pendleton | 49 | 28 | Cir |
| Charleston, S.C. | 73 | 44 | Cir | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Pennia | 66 | 36 | PCldy |
| Charlotte, N.C. | 66 | 37 | Cir | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Philadelphia | 54 | 33 | Cir |
| | | | | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Phoenix | 84 | 57 | Cir |
| | | | | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | Pittsburgh | 51 | 27 | Cldy |
| | | | | El Paso | 81 | 54 | Cldy | Jacksonville | 75 | 49 | Cir | | | | |

National temperature extremes
Hi: Wed., 85, Riverside, Calif.
Lo: Wed., 11, Lake Yellowstone, Wyo.

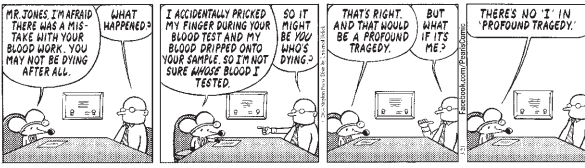
Frazz



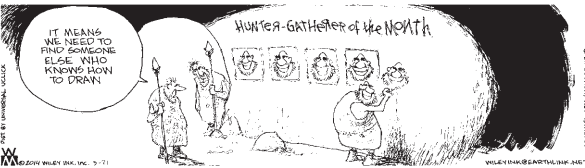
Dilbert



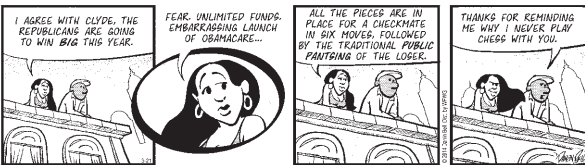
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



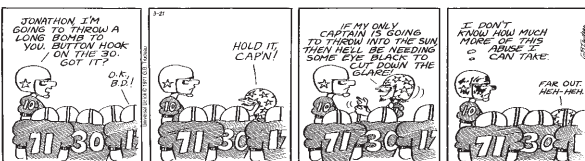
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Sped
- 6 Craze
- 9 Purse
- 12 Memorable mission
- 13 Hearty brew
- 14 Flamenco cheer
- 15 Custom
- 16 Sally Bowles' workplace
- 18 Speaks sheepishly?
- 20 Lisa's brother
- 21 Doc's org.
- 23 "No seats" sign
- 24 Five dozen
- 25 Swine
- 27 Angry
- 29 Satisfy
- 31 Polar sight
- 35 No-hitter pitcher Ryan
- 37 Gilbert of "The Talk"
- 38 Ornate
- 41 Japanese salad plant
- 43 Foundation
- 44 Hexagonal state
- 45 Graft's doubles partner?
- 47 Last car
- 49 Hiawatha's transport
- 52 Charlemagne's realm (Abbr.)
- 53 Evergreen type

DOWN

- 4 "Go, team!"
- 2 Carte intro
- 3 Coleslaw basis
- 4 Early Oscar winner
- 5 Loves too fondly
- 7 "Oh, woe!"
- 8 Society newbie
- 9 Common cleanser
- 10 On the qui vive
- 11 Big name in oil
- 17 Tolerates
- 19 The little mermaid
- 22 Wire measure
- 24 Moment
- 26 Quixote pal Panza
- 28 Sorta
- 30 Sauce source
- 32 Advisory panel
- 33 Exist
- 34 Cushion
- 36 Boring tools
- 38 Botanist Leonhard
- 39 Video game pioneer
- 40 Local theaters
- 42 Trash can dweller
- 45 Largest continent
- 46 Long story
- 48 Vacationing
- 50 Single
- 51 Schedule abbr.

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-21

CRYPTOQUIP

W QPYXFGZ IJ XPITBWXYVZ
DBWTTWAL IPCG PDD YFG
FWLF MTHWALQPVHZ, VAZ

IJ FVHZ ZWCG XHVMFGZ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN PEN PALS USE SWEARWORDS IN THEIR LETTERS, I WOULD CALL THOSE CORRESPONDENCE CURSES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals F

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

Can't explain Social Security with scraps

By MICHAEL HILTZIK

Los Angeles Times

Alby Huntsman is really, really upset about Social Security. We know this because the television presenter, a daughter of former GOP presidential contender Jon Huntsman, went on an extended rant about it Thursday on MSNBC's "The Cycle." The show is aimed at a younger audience of news consumers, and Huntsman, 27, is one of the four youthful co-hosts.

She thinks Social Security is going bankrupt, leaving her and her generation with nothing. "This is infuriating," she said, bouncing up and down in her chair like a petulant toddler, "because none of our elected officials seem to care enough to do anything about it."

Unfortunately, almost everything she said about Social Security in the name of making it "sustainable" for her generation was wrong.

Dead wrong.

Huntsman wants to tell it like it is, but she fails because of a lack of information. And if her generation believes what she said, it's going to be in deep trouble.

A lot of her spiel resembles the rants issuing from the mouth of former GOP Sen. Alan Simpson, 82, a veteran foot of Social Security misinformation — which says that error and ignorance are no respecters of age. Most of it has been debunked so thoroughly and repeatedly that one is tempted to believe that the misrepresentations are deliberate.

But as a follower to Huntsman and her generation, we'll set her straight. Again.

The core of Huntsman's plaint is that life expectancies in the U.S. have risen so sharply since 1935, when Social Security was enacted, that its current financial structure can't handle the change. Her figures are that average life expectancies for men have risen from 58 in 1935 to 76 in

2014, and for women from 62 to 80 in the same period.

"While we're living about two decades longer, we haven't made any real change," she said.

Huntsman makes the familiar error of confusing life expectancies from birth with the figures that actually matter to Social Security — life expectancies from age 65 when retirements typically have begun. (Under the law, the normal retirement age is rising; it will be 67 when Huntsman retires.)

Life expectancies from birth have indeed risen as she says, though the latest statistics available are from 2009, not 2014. But the difference there is almost entirely a result of improvements in infant mortality since 1935.

The change in life expectancies from age 65 is much lower. In 1935, a 65-year-old man was expected to live, on average, to about 77 and a woman to about 78. In 2009, the figures were about 83 for men and 85 for women. That's an extension of six to seven years, not two decades.

And as economist Dean Baker observes, Social Security's fiscal structure accommodates that. The payroll tax has increased from 2 percent (shared between employer and employee) at its inception to 12.4 percent today.

That additional revenue covers not only the great expansion of the program's benefits over the decades but also America's changing demographics. However, to exaggerate those demographics, Ms. Huntsman, is to do a serious disservice to your audience.

Another thing: Life expectancies are very sensitive to social and economic status. Average life expectancies from age 65 for black men, for instance, have increased by less than five years since 1935. If you raise the normal retirement age to 75, as Huntsman advocates, you are condemning

some of these workers to barely any retirement at all.

"Here's the reality," Huntsman declares (to Social Security advocates, this is usually a sign that a real blunder is on its way, and she doesn't disappoint): "At the rate we are spending, the system will be bankrupt by the time you and I are actually eligible to get these benefits. ... Would you rather have 90 percent of what you have today, or nothing at all?"

She concludes: "We might disagree about the prescription for the ailing patient, but doing nothing about it — that will lead to none for all, rather than at least some for us."

Where Huntsman got this idea is a mystery because no one who understands the program, from progressive supporters of Social Security to its conservative critics, says anything like that.

The most dire projections of the program's future say that "doing nothing about it" — no benefit cuts, no tax increases — will leave the program still able to pay 75 percent to 80 percent of scheduled benefits. Not "nothing at all." And that 75 percent to 80 percent would still be much more per month 75 years from now than retirees get today.

By the way, it's also untrue that President Barack Obama's budget plan makes "no mention of entitlement reform. None," as Huntsman claims. His budget proposes a very damaging cutback in Social Security disability, as well as changes to Medicare payment formulas to save money.

Huntsman has stitched her spiel together out of scraps and tatters of misinformation, of a sort we've heard from the older generation for years. They're no more accurate coming out the mouth of a millennial. But it's tragic to see that what she's learned from her elders is how to mislead her public.

Michael Hiltzik is a Los Angeles Times columnist.

Flexible work arrangements killed by 'reform'

By JAMES SHERK

Millions of salaried workers may soon lose flexibility in how they work. President Barack Obama plans to cover them under federal overtime regulations. This won't raise their pay. It will, however, effectively convert them into hourly workers — putting the kibosh on the flexible work arrangements many employees value.

Hourly employees get paid time-and-a-half for working more than 40 hours a week. However, under the "white collar exemption," businesses can pay many salaried employees for getting the job done, not simply for the hours they're logged. To qualify for this exemption, an employee must make more than a minimum salary, work in a professional field, and have sufficiently advanced responsibilities.

Obama plans to raise the salary threshold to expand eligibility. He has not yet said to what level, but observers close to the White House have suggested \$51,000 a year. If so, every salaried worker making less than that amount would qualify for overtime and would have to track their hours.

On the surface, this sounds great. Everyone wants workers to earn more. And these regulations will not accomplish this. Changing overtime eligibility does not actually raise workers' pay. Why not? Most employers will compensate by cutting salaries an offsetting amount.

Businesses responded exactly this way to overtime eligibility lawsuits. IBM, for example, recently gave several thousand

IBM recently gave several thousand salaried technical workers overtime as part of a legal settlement. The company also cut their base salaries by one-seventh.

salaried technical workers overtime as part of a legal settlement. The company also cut their base salaries by one-seventh. The workers' take-home pay remained the same.

But while changing overtime regulations will have little effect on workers' total earnings, it will affect how businesses do their bookkeeping. Unfortunately, these changes will prohibit many popular work arrangements. It would effectively turn millions of salaried employees into hourly workers.

Workers eligible for overtime cannot get paid for their results and productivity. The employer must log their hours and pay for time on the job. While this presents few difficulties for workers in a fixed workplace (like a store), it makes much less sense for professional employees who can work anywhere. Today millions of salaried employees check their work email on their smartphones, or telecommute from home.

Many employees value this flexibility,

especially working parents. For example, an investigative reporter might leave work early to attend his son's baseball game. Between innings, he might email sources to set up interviews. Then, after putting his son to bed, he could continue writing at home on his laptop. Such flexible work arrangements help parents balance their work and family lives.

Technological advances now give millions of Americans the freedom to work remotely. Nonetheless, most employers deny overtime-eligible workers this flexibility. They must track time worked or risk expensive lawsuits over back pay.

Research shows a third of large firms have curbed telecommuting because of overtime lawsuits. More than half have restricted the use of smartphones from home. The head of HR for Pitney Bowes, a large manufacturer, recently told the press the company wants to let sales-support employees work from home. They had to turn down the request; the employees qualified for overtime and the firm could not track their hours remotely. Did this benefit the workers?

The president may have good intentions, but goes into them not repeal the law of unintended consequences. Expanding overtime will do little to raise overall pay. Plus, it ignores the changing nature of work in the economy. Salaried workers do not need the government encouraging their employers to become less flexible about how they work.

James Sherk is a senior policy analyst in labor economics at The Heritage Foundation.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editors are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Help young illegals in court The (Henderson, Ky.) Gleaner

Until about three years ago, federal agents annually intercepted 8,000 unaccompanied minors entering the United States illegally. By last year, the number had jumped to nearly 26,000. This year's projection: As many as 60,000 youngsters may attempt to cross into this country without parents or papers.

This surge of underage humanity presents two problems.

First is understanding the forces propelling it, which experts say include narcotics trafficking, Central American gang violence and abusive homes. It's sensible to seek a regional approach to a humanitarian issue that is beyond the power of a single government to control. ...

The second problem the U.S. faces is what to do with the youngsters once they get here. Unlike people charged with criminal offenses, those detained on immigration violations do not have the right to a court-appointed attorney during deportation proceedings, so if the detained person can't afford a lawyer, he or she often faces the judge alone.

The issue is compounded when the defendant is a child. Often the children can't even understand the language, let alone the process, which means there is a very real chance that minors who qualify for asylum or other protections are being booted out of the country without a fair hearing.

The federal government should develop a system under which unaccompanied minors have access to a lawyer or experienced advocate (as happens in child-welfare court proceedings) to defend their interests.

Replicate SEALs' efficiency Tampa (FLA.) Tribune

Three cheers for the U.S. Navy's courageous commandos, who Monday thwarted an attempt by a rogue Libyan militia to sell stolen oil on the black market. The Pentagon said President Barack Obama authorized the Mediterranean intervention Sunday night. Within hours, a Navy SEAL team on the guided missile destroyer Roosevelt had boarded and taken control of the Morning Glory in the Mediterranean near Cyrenaica.

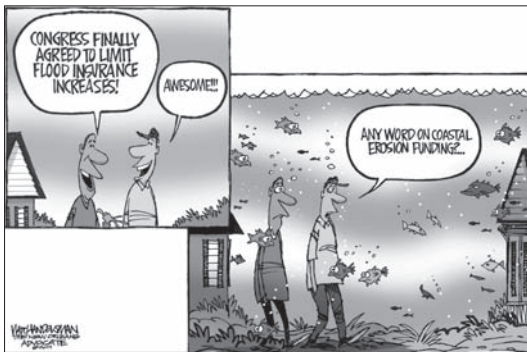
No one was injured in operation, which was executed with the characteristic SEAL efficiency.

It was a rare show of resolution by an administration that has often appeared uncertain, if not impotent, during the recent international crises that have stretched from Crimea to Venezuela. ...

The tanker, according to the Pentagon, had been stolen by three armed Libyans this month and then sailed into Sidra flying the North Korean flag, although the government in Pyongyang immediately denied the claim and accused the tanker of the plot to sell the stolen oil.

Apparently the militia had hoped to find a buyer somewhere in the Mediterranean and use the proceeds to enhance its standing in the ongoing conflict with the new government in Tripoli that has been struggling since a latter-day Robin Hood, stealing since Moammar Gadhafi's brutal dictatorship was overthrown in 2011.

The Navy described the capture of the tanker as a blow to the political ambitions of a militia leader named Ibrahim Jathran, who is said to portray himself as something of a latter-day Robin Hood, stealing from the government in order to improve



the lives of those under his command. But the crisis was also a threat to Americans and other foreigners with a financial stake in the Libyan oil business.

That the Navy stepped in to thwart Jathran's bold scheme is a welcome triumph for the United States at a time when success on the international front seems increasingly hard to achieve. But the action should not mislead anyone. The president needs a foreign policy that demands respect even when the SEALs are not involved.

Ukraine should've kept nukes The Wall Street Journal

The damage to world order from Vladimir Putin's invasion of Crimea will echo for years, but one of the biggest casualties deserves more attention: the cause of nuclear nonproliferation. One lesson to the world of Russia's cost-free carve-up of Ukraine is that nations that abandon their nuclear arsenals do so at their own peril.

This story goes back to the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia's nuclear arsenal was spread among the former Soviet republics that had become independent nations. Ukraine had some 1,800 nuclear weapons, including short-range tactical weapons, air-launched cruise missiles and bombers. Only Russia and the U.S. had more at the time and Ukraine's arsenal was both modern and highly survivable in the event of a first strike.

The U.S. was rightly concerned that these warheads could end up in the wrong hands, and the Clinton administration made controlling them a foreign-policy priority. The result was the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances in which Ukraine agreed to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and return its nuclear arsenal to Russia in exchange for security "assurances" by Russia, the U.S. and United Kingdom. Those included promises to respect Ukraine's independence and sovereignty within its existing borders, as well as refraining from threatening or using force against Ukraine.

Contrast that with the current crisis. President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron have blasted Russia for its violation of the Budapest accord, but those U.S. and U.K. assurances have been exposed as meaningless. That lesson isn't lost on Ukraine, but it also won't be lost on the rest of the world.

Had Kiev kept its weapons rather than giving them up in return for parchment promises, would Vladimir Putin have been so quick to invade Crimea two weeks ago? It's impossible to know, but it's likely it would have at least given him more pause.

Ukraine's fate is likely to make the world's nuclear rogues, such as Iran and North Korea, even less likely to give up their nuclear facilities or weapons. As important, it is likely to make non-nuclear

powers and even close U.S. allies wonder if they can still rely on America's security guarantees.

Assaults erode respect for rank The Seattle Times

So-called privileges of rank have taken on a perverse meaning in the U.S. military. Stunning tales of sexual assault at the highest levels of the service betray the grievous breadth of the abuse.

The U.S. Senate last week unanimously adopted changes in the military-justice system to protect victims when they step forward to report the crimes, and how those investigations and prosecutions are handled. New avenues of appeal were created in instances where military commanders refuse to proceed with sexual-assault charges. Earlier, the Senate failed to agree on legislation to strip commanders of that discretion.

Indignation over that legislative outcome may well have empowered last week's victory. This latest effort builds on changes made in 2013 that require civilian review of decisions not to prosecute, eliminate a statute of limitations for court-martial rape and assault cases, and criminalize retaliation for filing reports of assault.

The military has a crushing public-relations problem on its hands that could haunt recruitment and retention of personnel. Failure to protect men and women who have volunteered to defend their country is shameful. The willingness of the system to protect its own is disgraceful, if grimly predictable.

Erosion of respect for rank has consequences for unit cohesiveness and the basic willingness to work together, and indeed, follow orders. ... Imagine what it is like for young enlisted personnel and junior officers with virtually no one to turn to for help.

Elemental changes in attitudes and workplace conditions are needed to make the regulations approved by the Senate have full meaning. ... What the public sees now is the privileges of rank come with some vulgar assumptions about what can be done without accountability or penalty.

CIA must be held to account San Antonio Express-News

It's tempting to note on how the shoe is on the other foot for the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The latest news on who's spying on whom has the CIA accused of doing just that on the committee that provides its civilian oversight. A few months back, the National Security Agency was in the spotlight and the committee seemed loath to rein it in from its spying on U.S. citizens.

President Barack Obama in January announced a series of reforms after revelations of NSA spying — sparked by leaker Edward Snowden — caused a firestorm. A plan to end the NSA's collection and stor-

age of Americans' telephone communications is due on March 28.

But this latest revelation is an equally serious matter. At issue is whether the CIA tried to thwart the oversight Americans need.

In an extraordinary speech recently, the chairwoman of the intelligence committee, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., charged that the agency had secretly removed documents from a computer used by her staff investigating the CIA's interrogation program.

The Senate investigation into a program that clearly involved torture has resulted in a 6,300-page report. It's still secret. It should be made public as soon as possible.

As part of this Senate investigation, the CIA provided a computer network independent of the agency's own. Into that, it dumped the documents the committee needed, numbering into the millions. But afterward, committee staffers, Feinstein said, discovered that some documents that had clearly been in the system had been removed. The CIA has charged that Senate staffers got unauthorized access to an internal review of the detention program. Feinstein says the document was part of the CIA's security clearance process.

Meanwhile, the CIA director denies that spying occurred. The Justice Department is now left to sort it out, along with the CIA's inspector general.

If these charges are true, Fourth Amendment rights and the executive prohibition on investigations, but the very fact that one of the intelligence community's most ardent supporters has made these charges does nothing to refurbish this trust.

Feinstein was right to go public.

Still need flood insurance fix The (Newark, N.J.) Star-Ledger

In an act of compassion, the government will postpone reforms to the National Flood Insurance Program. Premiums skyrocketed beyond anyone's expectations, and still-suffering Hurricane Sandy victims faced being priced out of their homes. Families were desperate for relief, and lawmakers provided it.

President Barack Obama is expected to sign a four-year moratorium this week. But this delay, while humane, leaves in place a broken system that is \$26 billion in debt and encourages property owners to build — and rebuild — in the riskiest flood zones. Congress must ensure that its reforms, designed to make us more resilient after devastating storms, aren't undone.

What's more, the law is that the law being shelved — the 2012 Biggert-Waters Act — was a rarity: a bipartisan solution to a complicated, long-term problem: Because government subsidizes flood insurance premiums artificially low for decades, the National Flood Insurance Program was underfunded. After Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the government was forced to borrow billions from taxpayers to cover the claims. Biggert-Waters increased insurance rates so that, over time, premiums would match the risk.

But the new high-insurance bills began arriving last fall, sticker-shock in homes. Homes were suddenly unaffordable and impossible to sell at full price. So while the short-term bailout was crucial, it didn't solve the underlying problem: If property owners don't pay higher premiums, the system will never be able to fund a four-year delay is long enough for Congress' reforms to be forgotten or overturned. ...

Softening the blow for homeowners was humane, but Congress should study alternatives to help keep low- and middle-income families from being priced out. Biggert-Waters can't be allowed to fade away.

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

| Atlantic Division | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| Boston | 69 | 47 | 17 | 5 | 99 | 232 | 149 | | |
| Tampa Bay | 69 | 38 | 24 | 7 | 83 | 203 | 181 | | |
| Montreal | 70 | 38 | 25 | 7 | 83 | 186 | 177 | | |
| Toronto | 71 | 36 | 27 | 8 | 80 | 208 | 219 | | |
| Detroit | 68 | 34 | 33 | 11 | 75 | 184 | 204 | | |
| Ottawa | 68 | 28 | 27 | 13 | 69 | 194 | 229 | | |
| Florida | 69 | 26 | 25 | 8 | 60 | 172 | 223 | | |
| Buffalo | 69 | 19 | 42 | 8 | 46 | 133 | 205 | | |

| Metropolitan Division | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| Pittsburgh | 68 | 45 | 19 | 4 | 94 | 214 | 168 | | |
| Philadelphia | 68 | 35 | 25 | 7 | 79 | 195 | 195 | | |
| N.Y. Islanders | 70 | 37 | 29 | 4 | 76 | 204 | 209 | | |
| Columbus | 68 | 35 | 27 | 6 | 76 | 196 | 187 | | |
| Washington | 68 | 34 | 33 | 11 | 75 | 184 | 204 | | |
| New Jersey | 69 | 29 | 27 | 13 | 71 | 168 | 180 | | |
| Carolina | 69 | 30 | 30 | 9 | 69 | 172 | 195 | | |
| N.Y. Islanders | 70 | 26 | 35 | 9 | 61 | 185 | 239 | | |

Western Conference

| Central Division | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| St. Louis | 69 | 47 | 15 | 7 | 101 | 226 | 156 | | |
| Chicago | 70 | 40 | 15 | 15 | 95 | 237 | 182 | | |
| Colorado | 70 | 44 | 20 | 6 | 94 | 216 | 192 | | |
| Minnesota | 69 | 36 | 23 | 10 | 82 | 171 | 168 | | |
| Dallas | 68 | 32 | 25 | 11 | 75 | 194 | 197 | | |
| Winnipeg | 71 | 32 | 30 | 9 | 73 | 199 | 208 | | |
| Nashville | 70 | 29 | 31 | 10 | 68 | 165 | 208 | | |

| Pacific Division | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| Anaheim | 69 | 45 | 17 | 7 | 97 | 220 | 175 | | |
| San Jose | 69 | 43 | 18 | 7 | 97 | 216 | 168 | | |
| Los Angeles | 69 | 38 | 25 | 6 | 82 | 168 | 148 | | |
| Phoenix | 69 | 35 | 23 | 11 | 77 | 192 | 196 | | |
| Vancouver | 72 | 32 | 30 | 10 | 74 | 172 | 194 | | |
| Calgary | 69 | 28 | 34 | 7 | 63 | 168 | 203 | | |
| Edmonton | 70 | 25 | 36 | 9 | 59 | 176 | 225 | | |

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

| Tuesday's games | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Boston 4, New Jersey 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Minnesota 5, N.Y. Islanders 0 | | | | | | | | | |
| Pittsburgh 5, Dallas 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Carolina 3, Columbus 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Montreal 6, Colorado 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| N.Y. Rangers 8, Ottawa 4 | | | | | | | | | |
| Detroit 3, Buffalo 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Philadelphia 3, Chicago 2, OT | | | | | | | | | |
| Edmonton 5, Nashville 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Washington 3, Anaheim 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Florida 3, San Jose 2 | | | | | | | | | |

| Wednesday's games | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Tampa Bay 5, Toronto 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| Chicago 4, St. Louis 0 | | | | | | | | | |
| Winnipeg 5, Colorado 4, OT | | | | | | | | | |
| Vancouver 2, Nashville 0 | | | | | | | | | |

| Thursday's games | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Minnesota 4, New Jersey 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Dallas at Philadelphia | | | | | | | | | |
| Columbus at Montreal | | | | | | | | | |
| Tampa Bay at Ottawa | | | | | | | | | |
| Pittsburgh at Detroit | | | | | | | | | |
| Buffalo at Edmonton | | | | | | | | | |
| Florida at San Jose | | | | | | | | | |
| Washington at Los Angeles | | | | | | | | | |
| Anaheim at Phoenix | | | | | | | | | |

| Friday's games | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| N.Y. Rangers at Columbus | | | | | | | | | |
| Carolina at Chicago | | | | | | | | | |
| Nashville at Colorado | | | | | | | | | |
| Saturday's games | | | | | | | | | |
| St. Louis at Philadelphia | | | | | | | | | |
| Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh | | | | | | | | | |
| Pittsburgh at Minnesota | | | | | | | | | |
| Ottawa at Dallas | | | | | | | | | |
| Florida at Los Angeles | | | | | | | | | |
| Montreal at Toronto | | | | | | | | | |
| N.Y. Rangers at New Jersey | | | | | | | | | |
| Calgary at Phoenix | | | | | | | | | |
| Edmonton at Washington | | | | | | | | | |

| Sunday's games | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Columbus at N.Y. Islanders | | | | | | | | | |
| St. Louis at Pittsburgh | | | | | | | | | |
| Toronto at Nashville | | | | | | | | | |
| Nashville at Chicago | | | | | | | | | |
| Florida at Detroit | | | | | | | | | |
| Buffalo at Vancouver | | | | | | | | | |
| Florida at Anaheim | | | | | | | | | |

Wednesday

Canucks 2, Predators 0

| Nashville | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|---|---|----|-----|----|----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| Vancouver | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |

Third Period—1, Vancouver, Jensen 3 (H.Sedin, Hamhuis), 6:06; 2, Vancouver, Edler 6 (Blekes, H.Sedin), 7:19 (pp).
Shots on Goal—Nashville 14-6; 7-30. Vancouver 7-11; 4-22.
Power-play opportunities—Nashville 0 of 3; Vancouver 1 of 1.
Goalies—Nashville, Hutton 15-11; 4 (22 shots-20 saves). Vancouver, Lack 13-14 (30-30).
A—18,910 (18,910). T=2:15.

Blackhawks 4, Blues 0

| St. Louis | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|---|---|----|-----|----|----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| Chicago | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | |

First Period—1, Chicago, Keith 5 (Goose, Sharp), 19:05 (pp).
Second Period—2, Chicago, Shaw 18 (Ledy, Sharp), 15:35.
Third Period—3, Chicago, Kruger 7 (Regin, Hjalmarsson), 5:06; 4, Chicago, Smith 10 (Versteeg, Ledy), 7:35 (pp).
Shots on Goal—St. Louis 8-6-9-23. Chicago 11-11-8-30.

Power-play opportunities—St. Louis 0 of 3; Chicago 2 of 1.

Goalies—St. Louis, Miller 22-23; 4 (27 shots-23 saves). Elliott (F58 third, 3-23). Chicago, Crawford 27-12-10 (23-23).
A—21,640 (19,171). T=2:32.

Jets 5, Avalanche 4 (OT)

| Colorado | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|---|---|----|-----|----|----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| Winnipeg | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | | | | |

First Period—1, Colorado, O'Reilly 26 (Duchene, McGinn), 2:20; 2, Winnipeg, Ladd 20 (Little, Trouba), 3:15; 3, Winnipeg, Tangen 21 (Whitney, Ladd), 12:08; 4, Colorado, Landeskog 21 (Benoit, MacKinnon), 17:47.
Second Period—5, Winnipeg, Kane 17 (Setoguchi, Postma), 12:02; 6, Colorado, Holden 9 (Barrie, Talbot), 19:29.
Third Period—7, Winnipeg, Ladd 21 (Wheeler, Enstrom), 4:58 (pp); 8, Colorado, McLeod 3 (Talbot, Guerin), 10:23.
Overtime—9, Winnipeg, Wheeler 24 (Postma, Enstrom), 1:42.
Shots on Goal—Colorado 12-5-8-27. Winnipeg 8-11-7-27.

Power-play opportunities—Colorado 0 of 1; Winnipeg 1 of 2.

Goalies—Colorado, Berra 9-17; 3 (27 shots-22 saves). Winnipeg, Moller 12-6-3 (27-23).
A—15,004 (15,004). T=2:30.

Lightning 5, Maple Leafs 3

| Tampa Bay | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|---|---|----|-----|----|----|--|--|
| | GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | | |
| Toronto | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | | | | | |

First Period—1, Tampa Bay, Gudas 3 (Filipula), 5:29; 2, Toronto, Kessel 35 (Gunnarsson, Bozak), 3:31; 3, Toronto, Kulemin 9 (Gleason, Rielly), 10:32; 4, Tampa Bay, Stankos 17 (Filipula), 13:22 (pp).
Second Period—6, Tampa Bay, Stankos 18 (Johnson, Salo), 15:39.
Third Period—6, Tampa Bay, Stankos 19 (Malone, Brewer), 5:55.
Overtime—1, Toronto, Gudas 10 (Franson, Bozak), 8:20; 8, Tampa Bay, Johnson 22 (Malone, Purcell), 12:56 (pp).
Shots on Goal—Tampa Bay 9-14-9-30. Toronto 7-10-22-39.
Power-play opportunities—Tampa Bay 2 of 5; Toronto 0 of 3.
Goalies—Tampa Bay, Bishop 33-11-6 (39 shots-36 saves). Toronto, Reimer 11-11-30 (25-25).
A—19,585 (18,819). T=2:35.

Roundup

Blackhawks shut down Blues
Chicago loses Kane for 3 weeks to injury in physical division battle

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Chicago Blackhawks helped their coach reach another milestone by putting forth the kind of buttoned-down, hard-nosed effort Joel Quenneville admires.

But it came with quite a price — an injury to leading scorer Patrick Kane that is expected to sideline the star forward for about three weeks.

Corey Crawford stopped 23 shots for his second shutout this season, backstopping the Blackhawks to a physical 4-0 victory over the St. Louis Blues on Wednesday night that gave Quenneville his 700th NHL win.

"I'll take any kind of win, but I certainly liked everything about how we went about tonight's game," Quenneville said. "It was a real solid team victory for us, something we've been trying to do against these guys all year."

It was a costly victory, though. Kane left the game at 7:56 of the second period, favoring his left leg as he headed to the dressing room following a collision with Brendan Morrow.

Kane is expected to miss about three weeks with a lower-body injury, Quenneville said.

"He's a special player," Quenneville said. "We'll work our way through this. It's a huge loss for us."

Duncan Keith, Andrew Shaw, Marcus Kruger and Ben Smith scored as Chicago ended the league-leading Blues' nine-game point streak (8-0-1) and dealt St. Louis its first regulation loss against a Central Division foe this season (20-1-2). The Blues hadn't lost in regulation since Feb. 28, a 1-0 defeat at Anaheim.

Quenneville, who previously guided St. Louis and Colorado, has the most wins of any active NHL coach and ranks third all-time behind Al Arbour and Scotty Bow-



PAUL BEATY/AP

The St. Louis Blues' T.J. Oshie, left, shoots on goal against Chicago Blackhawks goalie Corey Crawford, center, and defenseman Duncan Keith during the third period of Wednesday's game in Chicago.

President's Trophy race

| | W | L | OT | Pts | Gms Left |
|------------|----|----|----|-----|----------|
| St. Louis | 47 | 15 | 7 | 101 | 13 |
| Boston | 45 | 17 | 7 | 99 | 13 |
| Anaheim | 45 | 17 | 7 | 97 | 13 |
| San Jose | 45 | 18 | 7 | 97 | 12 |
| Chicago | 40 | 15 | 15 | 92 | 12 |
| Pittsburgh | 45 | 19 | 4 | 94 | 14 |
| Colorado | 44 | 20 | 5 | 93 | 13 |

SOURCE: The Associated Press

man, now the Blackhawks' senior adviser of hockey operations.

Crawford earned his 10th career shutout in Chicago's first win against the Blues this season after three losses.

"Tonight we knew was going to be a tough matchup," Crawford said. "It was physical — it seems like it's always physical against these guys. It felt like a playoff atmosphere."

Lightning 5, Maple Leafs 3: Steven Stamkos had a natural hat trick and visiting Tampa Bay won a game that included a frightening injury to Toronto defenseman Paul Ranger.

Ranger left the ice on a stretcher after his head hit the boards following a first-period hit from Alex Kilorn. Ranger was "stable, conscious and alert," according to the Maple Leafs, after being taken to the hospital for what the team called a "precautionary assessment."

Jets 5, Avalanche 4 (OT): Blake Wheeler scored in overtime with a shot through the crowd to lift Winnipeg over visiting Colorado.

Andrew Ladd scored twice for the Jets and Eric Tangradi and Evander Kane also had goals.

Canucks 2, Predators 0: Eddie Lack made 30 saves, and Nicklas Jensen and Alex Edler scored 1:13 apart in the third period of host Vancouver's win over Nashville.



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SETH WENIG/AP

Knicks' forward Carmelo Anthony dunks against the Pacers at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday in New York.

Roundup

Knicks extend win streak to seven

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Carmelo Anthony scored 34 points as the New York Knicks opened the Phil Jackson era by beating the Indiana Pacers 92-86 Wednesday for their season-high seventh straight victory.

With their new team president watching from a midcourt seat, the Knicks dominated the first half, then pulled away after the Eastern Conference leaders finally got untracked in the second half.

Fans stood to cheer Jackson in the first quarter and were on their feet again in the final minute to watch the Knicks beat the team that knocked them out of the playoffs last year.

Timberwolves 123, Mavericks 122 (OT): Kevin Love scored 35 points, including the go-ahead basket in overtime, and Ricky Rubio had a triple-double as Minnesota blew several leads before hanging on to beat Dallas.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 27 for Dallas and put the Mavericks ahead with a fadeaway over Love with 33 seconds left in overtime before Love scored on a jump shot with 17 seconds to go.

Rubio had 22 points, 15 assists and 10 rebounds.

Bulls 102, 76ers 94: D.J. Augustin scored 20 points, and Taj Gibson had 19 points and 13 rebounds as host Philadelphia lost its 22nd straight game.

The Sixers are four losses shy

of matching the NBA record for longest-single season losing streak.

Celtics 101, Heat 96: Rajon Rondo hit two running baseline shots in the last two minutes as Boston capitalized on the absence of LeBron James to beat visiting Miami.

Spurs 125, Lakers 109: Tony Parker scored 25 points, and Kawhi Leonard added 22 points and 10 rebounds as San Antonio pulled away from host Los Angeles for its 11th consecutive victory.

Nets 104, Bobcats 99: Deron Williams scored 23 points and Joe Johnson added 20 as Brooklyn overcame a late deficit to win its 10th straight at home.

Raptors 107, Pelicans 100: DeMar DeRozan scored 31 points and Greivis Vasquez victimized his former team with six points in the last two minutes to help Toronto defeat host New Orleans.

Grizzlies 96, Jazz 86: Zach Randolph scored 21 points and Marc Gasol added 20 as host Memphis maintained its hold on a Western Conference playoff spot with the victory over Utah.

Suns 109, Magic 93: Goran Dragic scored 18 points to lead a balanced offense as Phoenix used a big second-half run to jumpstart Orlando.

Nuggets 118, Pistons 109: Aaron Brooks had 27 points and a career-high 17 assists to lead host Denver past Detroit for its fourth win in five games.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

| Atlantic Division | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Toronto | 19 | 29 | .567 | |
| Brooklyn | 35 | 31 | .530 | 2½ |
| New York | 35 | 32 | .524 | 3 |
| Boston | 23 | 46 | .333 | 16 |
| Philadelphia | 15 | 53 | .221 | 23½ |

| Southeast Division | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| x-Miami | 46 | 20 | .697 | |
| Washington | 35 | 32 | .524 | 1½ |
| Charlotte | 33 | 36 | .478 | 11½ |
| Atlanta | 31 | 39 | .442 | 10½ |
| Orlando | 19 | 50 | .275 | 28½ |

| Central Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| x-Indiana | 49 | 18 | .735 | |
| Chicago | 38 | 30 | .559 | 12 |
| Cleveland | 36 | 42 | .462 | 24 |
| Detroit | 25 | 43 | .373 | 24½ |
| Milwaukee | 13 | 55 | .191 | 37 |

| Western Conference | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|----|
| Northwest Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| San Antonio | 51 | 16 | .761 | |
| Houston | 45 | 22 | .677 | 11 |
| Memphis | 40 | 27 | .597 | 11 |
| Dallas | 41 | 28 | .594 | 11 |
| New Orleans | 49 | 40 | .554 | 24 |

| Pacific Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Oklahoma City | 49 | 18 | .731 | |
| Portland | 44 | 24 | .646 | 5½ |
| Minnesota | 34 | 32 | .515 | 18½ |
| Denver | 37 | 40 | .484 | 16 |
| Utah | 22 | 47 | .319 | 28 |

| Southwest Division | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| L.A. Clippers | 48 | 21 | .696 | |
| Golden State | 47 | 22 | .682 | 1 |
| Phoenix | 39 | 29 | .574 | 8½ |
| Sacramento | 24 | 44 | .353 | 23½ |
| L.A. Lakers | 22 | 45 | .329 | 25 |

x-clinched playoff spot

| Tuesday's games | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Miami 100, Cleveland 96 | | | | |
| Atlanta 120, Toronto 113 | | | | |
| Portland 120, Milwaukee 115 | | | | |
| Sacramento 117, Washington 111 | | | | |
| Golden State 103, Orlando 99 | | | | |

| Wednesday's games | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Chicago 102, Philadelphia 94 | | | | |
| Brooklyn 104, Charlotte 99 | | | | |
| Boston 101, Miami 96 | | | | |
| Memphis 96, Utah 86 | | | | |
| Toronto 107, New Orleans 100 | | | | |
| New York 92, Indiana 86 | | | | |
| Minnesota 123, Dallas 122 | | | | |
| Houston 118, Detroit 109 | | | | |
| Phoenix 109, Orlando 93 | | | | |
| San Antonio 125, Los Angeles 109 | | | | |

| Thursday's games | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Oklahoma City at Cleveland | | | | |
| Minnesota at Houston | | | | |
| Washington at Portland | | | | |
| Milwaukee at Golden State | | | | |

| Friday's games | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Chicago at Indiana | | | | |
| New York at Philadelphia | | | | |
| Oklahoma City at Toronto | | | | |
| Boston at Brooklyn | | | | |
| Memphis at Miami | | | | |
| New Orleans at Atlanta | | | | |
| Denver at Dallas | | | | |
| Detroit at Phoenix | | | | |
| San Antonio at Sacramento | | | | |
| Washington at L.A. Lakers | | | | |

Wednesday

T-wolves 123, Mavericks 122 (OT)

MINNESOTA — Brewer 6-15 0-13, Love 11-14 3-14, Deng 5-6 0-6, Rubio 8-12 6-22, Martin 5-15 6-19, Barea 6-13 1-25, Cunningham 14-1-23, Budinger 0-2 0-0, Hummel 2-6 0-6. Totals 44-92 25-113.

DALLAS — Marion 8-12 0-16, Nowitzki 11-27 5-27, Dambert 3-7 1-27, Calderon 10-19 0-12, Ellis 7-13, Carter 4-13 1-23, Carter 4-13 1-23, Harrison 4-11 1-23, Ellington 0-0 0-0, Blair 0-0 0-0, Crowder 1-4 0-0, Hummel 2-6 0-6. Totals 44-92 25-113.

MINNESOTA 37 29 19 10-22
DALLAS 24 26 9-12
 Three-Point Goals—Minnesota 10-29 (Martin 3-7, Hummel 2-5, Love 2-5, Barea 2-7, Brewer 1-3, Rubio 1-3, Cunningham 1-1), Dallas 9-27 (Ellis 4-8, Carter 3-7, Harrison 1-3, Blair 1-3, Nowitzki 0-7). Fouled Out—Carter, Rebounds—Minnesota 52 (Deng 11), Dallas 46 (Caldwell 12), Minnesota 19 (Deng 12), Dallas 25 (Technicals—5).

Suns 109, Magic 93: Goran Dragic scored 18 points to lead a balanced offense as Phoenix used a big second-half run to jumpstart Orlando.

Nuggets 118, Pistons 109: Aaron Brooks had 27 points and a career-high 17 assists to lead host Denver past Detroit for its fourth win in five games.

Ejected—Vucetic, A-17:508 (18:42).

Grizzlies 96, Jazz 86

UTAH — Jefferson 4-5 0-9, Favors 3-10 0-2, Kanter 6-14 0-12, Burke 4-14 1-16, Hayward 7-16 2-5 2-5, Burkhardt 1-16 Williams 4-7 0-9, Garrett 1-0 0-2, Evans 0-0 0-0, Total Fouts—Utah 22, Grizzlies 22-35.

MEMPHIS — Prince 2-7 0-4, Randolph 8-16 5-7, Gasol 6-14 8-20, Conley 7-15 3-4 18, Lee 4-8 0-8, Koutouros 3-11 7, Allen 3-8 4-10, Miller 2-5 1-6, Calathes 1-0 0-0, Leuer 0-0 0-0, Total Fouts—Utah 22, Memphis 18, Technicals—Utah defensive three second, A-17:01 (18:19).

Nets 104, Bobcats 99

CHARLOTTE — Kidd-Gilchrist 3-6 1-2, McRoberts 3-5 1-13, Jefferson 9-19 2-16, Walker 5-8 2-7, Henderson 6-13 0-13, Neal 5-9 4-17, Douglas-Roberts 5-9 0-13, Zeller 5-9 0-10, Rimour 2-5 0-4, B-Jombo 1-2 0-2, Total Fouts—Utah 22, Memphis 18, Technicals—Utah defensive three second, A-17:01 (18:19).

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MLB



First baseman Paul Goldschmidt typifies the Diamondbacks' toughness, according to Dodgers manager Don Mattingly.

GREGORY BULL/AP

Early start

Dodgers, Diamondbacks start season in Australia

By DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

SYDNEY
Suspensions to eight players and a controversial NL West-clinching swimming pool incident last season helped expand a growing rivalry between the Los Angeles Dodgers and Arizona Diamondbacks.

But Dodgers manager Don Mattingly said he doesn't expect any serious animosity to carry over from last year when the teams meet to open the major league season Saturday and Sunday at the Sydney Cricket Ground. But he couldn't rule it out either.

The suspensions came after a brawl last June and the incident was credited with igniting the Dodgers' run that moved them to the division title. Then when the Dodgers clinched the division crown in Arizona, they upset many Diamondbacks players by celebrating in the Chase Field swimming pool.

"Kirk (Gibson, Diamondbacks manager) talked about it a bit yesterday," Mattingly said. "It's a rivalry when you play somebody 19 times a year in your own division. Those games get heated."

"I don't feel like there is going to be (problems) ... maybe there is. These guys play hard and they're tough. For us, what happened last year is over and we should move forward and play."

Gibson was more or less conciliatory when asked about the brewing rivalry on Tuesday, preferring to talk about Australia as the location for his 1985 honeymoon "and that worked out pretty good, so I'm hoping this does. We're ready to go."

Mattingly said people don't think of baseball as a tough, physical sport "in terms of football, hockey or in this country, rugby."

"Baseball is more mental

toughness," he added. "Night in and night out, the travel, getting in late, all kinds of different things you deal with."

And he feels like the Dodgers match up.

"We feel like we're tough," Mattingly said. "We got down in the division 10 games at one point, surviving that and then ended up winning by 10 or 11. When you love to play, it's easier to get ready to play. I think we've got guys who love playing."

Mattingly said first baseman Paul Goldschmidt typified the toughness of the Diamondbacks.

"He's kind of gotten to be a beast, hard to deal with, tough to pitch to," Mattingly said. "He's really killed us. He's just getting to be a tough and tougher out. We treat him with a lot of respect."

On Tuesday, Goldschmidt said of the rivalry: "We play each other a lot. Guys aren't going to be worried about being laid back."

Both teams held workouts Wednesday, and some members of the Dodgers went to Bondi Beach to help out local surf lifesavers. First-game starter Clayton Kershaw, celebrating his 26th birthday Wednesday, was photographed with his wife cuddling a kangaroo and received a cake on the SCG field.

On Thursday, the Dodgers will play Team Australia in an exhibition game and the Diamondbacks provide the opposition against Australia on Friday.

"We won't use any top-line pitchers in that game," Mattingly said of the exhibition. "We'll try to make sure we won't have any one over-exposed."

In injury news, Mattingly said he didn't expect a right shoulder injury to Dodgers left fielder Carl Crawford during a minor league game Tuesday to be serious. Crawford left the game after the injury.

Mattingly said no MRI exams or other scans were scheduled, "but that could change."

Crawford is one of four Dodgers left behind at Camelback Ranch in Phoenix because his fiancée is about to give birth.

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Briefly

Reds' Chapman gets plate in head after hit

The Associated Press

GOODYEAR, Ariz. — Cincinnati Reds closer Aroldis Chapman underwent surgery Thursday to repair a broken bone above his left eye but has no other serious injuries after being hit in the face by a line drive in a spring training game.

Team doctor Tim Krenchek called Chapman "a very lucky guy."

Krenchek said a metal plate will be inserted in the bone and will remain there permanently. He said Chapman has a very mild concussion but no other brain injury and no injury to his eye.

Kansas City's Salvador Perez landed Chapman's 99 mph fastball into the pitcher's face in Wednesday night's game. Chapman collapsed to the ground, moaning in pain and kicking his feet, then was taken off the field by stretcher.

Catcher Brayan Pena was with Chapman Thursday morning and says the pitcher was in good spirits.

Perez appeared to be in tears as he left the field, and first baseman Eric Hosmer hugged him. Perez quickly left the clubhouse without speaking to reporters. Hosmer hit a line drive off the head of Tampa Bay's Alex Cobb last June. Cobb sustained a concussion.

Playing right field, Reds teammate Jay Bruce heard the ball hit Chapman.

It was one of the more frightening and non-fun moments I've been a part of on the baseball field," he said.

After Chapman was driven off to the waiting ambulance, Price and Royals manager Ned Yost met with the umpires. The exhibition was called after an 8-minute delay with Kansas City leading 6-3.

"It was really a mutual agreement," crew chief Chris Guccione said. "Players were rattled. The staff was rattled. The umpires were rattled. We figured it was best, along with both teams in agreement that the game should end."

In other baseball news:

■ Detroit Tigers shortstop Jose Iglesias will be out four to six months because of stress fractures in both legs. He was examined by a specialist on Tuesday, and is scheduled to be evaluated again in four months. Iglesias will be relegated to non-weight-bearing exercises and upper-body conditioning for four to six months.

■ Atlanta Braves pitcher Brandon Beachy will have ligament-replacement surgery in his right elbow for the second time and is expected to miss this season.

Titans release veteran placekicker Bironas

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans have released Rob Bironas, the franchise's second-leading career scorer and one of the most accurate kickers in NFL history.

Bironas had 1,032 career points in his nine-year career with Tennessee and was just 28 points behind Al Del Greco, the top scorer in the history of the Houston Oilers and Tennessee Titans organization. Bironas has made 85.7 percent of his career field-goal attempts (239 of 279) to rank fourth in NFL history in accuracy.

Bironas made a franchise-record 11 game-winning field goals during his career, including a 60-yarder against the Indianapolis Colts in 2006 that remains the longest field goal in Oilers or Titans history. Bironas kicked an NFL single-game record eight field goals in a 2007 win over the Houston Texans, including a 29-yard game-winner as time expired.

In other NFL news: ■ Carolina Panthers officials said Cam Newton had successful surgery on his left ankle and the two-time Pro Bowl quarterback will be sidelined for four months.

■ The Packers have formally announced the re-signing of backup running back James Starks, keeping their formidable back-field intact.

Red Bull F1 team appeals Ricciardo's DQ

PARIS — Formula One team Red Bull has officially appealed to motor sport's governing body over Daniel Ricciardo's disqualification from last weekend's season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

The Australian driver thrilled the home crowd with a second-place finish behind German winner Nico Rosberg to secure what looked like his first career podium on his debut for Red Bull, where he replaced veteran driver Mark Webber during the off-season.

However, he was stripped of the result due to a technical breach. Race stewards said his car violated fuel-flow rules introduced this year which limit cars to 220 pounds of fuel during the race.

The F1's subsequently disqualified Ricciardo, elevating McLaren drivers Kevin Magnussen and Jensen Button to second and third, respectively.

Ducks' Fowler out 3-5 weeks with knee injury

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Anaheim Ducks defenseman Cam Fowler will be out 3-5 weeks with a sprained ligament in his left knee.

Fowler has missed Anaheim's last two games with the injury, which could keep him out for the rest of the regular season. He was hurt in the second period of a game in Colorado on March 14.

In other NHL news:

■ Detroit Red Wings defenseman Jonathan Ericsson had surgery on the middle finger of his left hand Wednesday and is expected to be out 4-6 weeks. He broke his finger and partially tore a tendon during Tuesday's game against Toronto.



ISAAC BREKKE/AP

New Mexico's Kendall Williams, center front, celebrates with teammates after beating No. 13 San Diego State for the Mountain West Conference tournament championship on Saturday in Las Vegas. The win earned the 17th-ranked Lobos an automatic berth in the NCAA tournament.

New Mexico to try a new approach for tournament

By GLEN ROSALES
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — It's a memory that everybody connected to the New Mexico basketball program is hard-pressed to forget.

A year ago, the Lobos were media darlings. They were seeded third and were a popular pick to reach the Final Four.

This from a program that had never won more than one game in any NCAA tournament.

Rather than reaching the last weekend of the season, New Mexico fell to unheralded and fourth-seeded Harvard in the opening game.

"We all know what that feeling was like in the locker room last year," Lobos first-year coach Craig Neal said. "And my biggest goal was to try and get them back and we got them back. So hopefully they'll take it from there."

The seeded-seventh Lobos (27-6) meet No. 10 Stanford (21-12) on Friday in St. Louis.

But Neal, who took over the program when Steve Alford left for UCLA shortly after that Harvard defeat, is doing things his own way this time around. "It started with the selection show. The previous two seasons, after New Mexico won the Mountain West tournament, it hosted a selection show love fest in The Pit in front of thousands of fans. Not this season."

"We got some rest and now we're going to have a week to pre-

pare for a team that we feel we can go out and hopefully seal up a powerful offense that is dynamic, has a lot of talent on that end," said senior guard Kendall Williams. "We're feeling like we're in a good place right now."

The Pit production just got to be too exhausting, Neal said.

"I just wanted my guys to get away from it," he said. "That's a long day when you win the Mountain West tournament and you fly back at 7 (a.m.) and then you have to do the selection show and that's a long production. And then by time each one of the (media) talks to each guy, it ends up being a four-hour deal."

The idea, Neal said, was not so much to celebrate what's been accomplished but to focus on what still needs to be done.

"Our whole thing is where we're going," he said. "We're pretty focused and we have a purpose. I changed up a little of what we do, trying to make them a little bit more relaxed."

The attention last season may have been a bit much for a program not used to such things, said senior power forward Cameron Bastrow.

"I think we had some of it last year when we did get a lot of recognition, and I think in some aspects, we did let it get into our heads a bit," he said. "I think it's

something you have to take it as it is. We haven't been getting a lot of recognition for most of my time here so when you do get it, you just have to adjust and listen to people inside your inner circle and play your own game."

The Lobos entered this season using the concept of unfinished business as a mantra.

"We're going in there with the mindset that we're going to be in there as long as possible," Williams said. "Compete as hard as we can, because last year I don't think that's really where our focus was. So if there's anything we can take out of unfinished business, it's the aggressive mindset that this is our last chance."

Kendall

Williams

New Mexico

senior guard

Neal said he is grateful his squad had an extra day of rest after playing three grueling games three days at the conference tournament in Las Vegas.

As for preparation, the coach said he's going to work on a few more Xs and Os as he gets the team prepared to face the Cardinal.

"I'm going to do a little bit more playing, a little bit more scrimmaging," he said. "A little bit more situational, game-like situations that we've done in the past, but we just didn't do it a lot last year because we were kind of run down at the end of the year. I think our guys are fresher. I think physically they're in a lot better shape than they were a year ago."

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Scoreboard

First round

At Dayton, Ohio

Tuesday, March 18
 Albany (N.Y.) 71, Mount St. Mary's 64
 N.C. State 74, Xavier 59
 Wednesday, March 19
 Cal Poly 63, Texas Southern 69
 Tennessee 76, Iowa 65

East Regional

Second Round

Thursday, March 20

At Buffalo, N.Y.
 UConn (26-8) vs. Saint Joseph's (24-9)
 Villanova (25-4) vs. Milwaukee (21-13)
 At Spokane, Wash.
 Cincinnati (26-6) vs. Harvard (26-4)
 Michigan State (26-8) vs. Delaware (25-9)

Friday, March 21
 At Raleigh, N.C.
 Memphis (22-9) vs. George Washington (24-8)
 Virginia (26-6) vs. Coastal Carolina (21-12)

At San Antonio

North Carolina (23-9) vs. Providence (23-11)
 Iowa State (26-7) vs. North Carolina Central (28-5)

Third Round

Saturday, March 22

At Buffalo, N.Y.
 Villanova-Milwaukee winner vs. UConn-Saint Joseph's winner
 At Spokane, Wash.
 Michigan State-Delaware winner vs. Cincinnati-Harvard winner

Sunday, March 23
 At Raleigh, N.C.
 Virginia-Coastal Carolina winner vs. Memphis-George Washington winner
 At San Antonio
 Iowa State-North Carolina Central winner vs. North Carolina-Providence winner

South Regional

Second Round

Thursday, March 20

At Buffalo, N.Y.
 Ohio State (25-9) vs. Dayton (23-10)
 Syracuse (27-5) vs. Western Michigan (23-9)

At Orlando, Fla.

Colorado (21-11) vs. Pittsburgh (25-9)
 Florida (32-2) vs. Albany (N.Y.) (19-14)

Friday, March 21

At St. Louis
 New Mexico (27-6) vs. Stanford (21-12)
 Kansas (24-8) vs. Eastern Kentucky (24-9)

At San Diego

VCU (26-8) vs. Stephen F. Austin (31-2)
 UCLA (26-8) vs. Tulsa (21-12)

Third Round

Saturday, March 22

At Buffalo, N.Y.
 Syracuse-Western Michigan winner vs. Ohio State-Dayton winner

At Orlando, Fla.
 Florida-Albany (N.Y.) winner vs. Colorado-Pittsburgh winner

Sunday, March 23

At St. Louis
 Kansas-Eastern Kentucky winner vs. New Mexico-Stanford winner

At San Diego
 UCLA-Tulsa winner vs. VCU-Stephen F. Austin winner

Midwest Regional

Second Round

Thursday, March 20

At Orlando, Fla.
 Saint Louis (25-6) vs. N.C. State (22-13)
 Louisville (29-5) vs. Manhattan (25-7)

At Milwaukee

Michigan (25-8) vs. Wakeford (20-12)
 Texas (23-10) vs. Arizona State (21-11)

Friday, March 21

At Raleigh, N.C.
 Duke (26-8) vs. Mercer (26-8)
 UMass (24-8) vs. Tennessee (22-12)

Wichita State (34-0) vs. Cal Poly (14-19)
 Kentucky (24-10) vs. Iowa State (28-12)

Third Round

Saturday, March 22

At Orlando, Fla.
 Villanova-Manhattan winner vs. Saint Louis-N.C. State winner

At Milwaukee
 Michigan-Wakeford winner vs. Texas-Arizona State winner

Sunday, March 23

At Raleigh, N.C.
 Duke-Mercer winner vs. UMass-Tennessee winner

At St. Louis
 Wichita State-Cal Poly winner vs. Kentucky-Kansas State winner

West Regional

Second Round

Thursday, March 20

Wisconsin (26-7) vs. American (20-12)
 Oregon (24-8) vs. BYU (23-11)

At Spokane, Wash.

At Spokane, Wash.
 Oklahoma (25-9) vs. North Dakota State (25-6)
 San Diego State (29-4) vs. New Mexico State (26-9)

Friday, March 21

At San Antonio
 Baylor (24-11) vs. Nebraska (19-12)
 Creighton (26-7) vs. Louisiana-Lafayette (22-11)

At San Diego

Arizona (28-6) vs. New State (19-11)
 Gonzaga (20-4) vs. Oklahoma State (21-12)

Third Round

Saturday, March 22

At Milwaukee
 Wisconsin-American winner vs. Oregon-BYU winner

At Spokane, Wash.
 San Diego State-New Mexico State winner vs. Oklahoma-North Dakota State winner

Sunday, March 23

At San Antonio
 Creighton-Louisiana-Lafayette winner vs. Baylor-Nebraska winner

At San Diego
 Arizona-Weber State winner vs. Gonzaga-Oklahoma State winner

Tennessee, Cal Poly move on

Teams wrap up First Four, earn berths in field of 64

By JOE KAY

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Tennessee gave the NCAA tournament its first improbable comeback. Cal Poly won, too — which was improbable in itself.

The First Four turned into quite a starting point.

With forward Jarnell Stokes using his 280 pounds to dominate inside and a highly regarded defense finally locking in, Tennessee wrapped up the First Four with a 78-65 victory over Iowa on Wednesday night.

Stokes opened overtime with a three-point play that put Tennessee ahead to stay, and the Volunteers' defense held Iowa to one free throw in overtime.

"I told our guys we've been through everything this season, keep your composure down the stretch," said coach Cuonzo Martin, who got his first NCAA tournament win in his third season at Tennessee. "Find ways to win the ball game."

The Vols (22-12) head to Raleigh, N.C., where they'll play sixth-seeded Massachusetts on Friday in the Midwest Regional. They left Dayton with a lot of momentum — six wins in their last seven games.

"We did a tremendous job toward the end of fighting back," said Jordan McRae, who had 20 points. "We did a great job on our defense. For us to hold them like we did was a great job."

Tennessee didn't lead until Antonio Barton's three-point shot put the Vols up 59-57 with 3:05 left in regulation. There were five lead changes before McRae missed a jumper at the buzzer, leaving it tied at 64.

Stokes' three-point play in overtime was the key moment in his 18-point, 13-rebound performance, putting the Volunteers ahead to stay. It was his 20th double-double this season, the most by a Volunteer since Bernard King had 22 of them in 1976-77.

Tennessee's highly regarded defense took it from there. The Hawkeyes (21-13) missed all eight of their shots from the field in overtime.

It was a tough ending to a long and stressful day for Iowa coach Fran McCaffery. He started the day in Iowa with his teenage son, Patrick, who had surgery to remove a thyroid tumor. His assistant coaches led the Hawkeyes through a meeting and their final practice, and McCaffery was back by game time.



SKIP PETERSON/AP

Tennessee guard Jordan McRae, left, drives to the basket against Iowa forward Zach McCabe during overtime of Wednesday's First Four game of the NCAA tournament in Dayton, Ohio.

On TV

All times CET

No. 3 Duke vs. No. 14 Mercer
 5 p.m. Friday, AFN-Sports

No. 6 Baylor vs. No. 11 Nebraska
 5:30 p.m. Friday, AFN-Xtra

No. 1 Arizona
 vs. No. 16 Weber State
 7 p.m. Friday, AFN-Pacific

No. 6 Massachusetts
 vs. No. 11 Tennessee
 7:30 p.m. Friday, AFN-Sports

No. 3 Creighton
 vs. No. 14 Louisiana-Lafayette
 8 p.m. Friday, AFN-Xtra

No. 8 Gonzaga
 vs. No. 9 Oklahoma State
 9:30 p.m. Friday, AFN-Pacific

No. 6 North Carolina
 vs. No. 16 Cal Poly
 Midnight Friday, AFN-Pacific

No. 1 Wichita State
 vs. No. 16 Cal Poly
 Midnight Friday, AFN-Sports

The night started with Cal Poly becoming the first 19-loss team in 59 years to win an NCAA tournament game, stunning Texas Southern 81-69.

Chris Eversley scored 19 points and David Nwaba had 17 to help Cal Poly (14-19) become the first team since Bradley in 1955 to win with so many losses on the season.

Now the team with the worst record in the tournament moves on to face the one with the best — top-seeded Wichita State (34-0) — in the second round in St. Louis on Friday.

It's exactly what Mustangs coach Joe Callero had hoped.

"I'm so weird that I was cheering the last five years that a 16 (seed) never updates a 1," he said. "Because if we ever got to 16, we'd be a 16 seed and then we'd have a chance to make real history."

The Mustangs were 4-9 early this season. They didn't exactly inspire confidence heading into the Big West Conference tournament, having lost nine of 11, but

they still won the title to earn the program's first NCAA bid.

Held back by injuries all year, a team that shot 41 percent from the field for the season saved its best for last by hitting 57 percent on the biggest stage.

Eversley laughed when asked if Wichita State should be worried.

"We're going to get on a plane tonight, get to St. Louis, Missouri, and just go start on a scouting report and make sure we're ready for Wichita State — and go out there keep playing the way we've been playing," he said.

Aaric Murray closed out his career with 38 points for Texas Southern (19-15).

"They took advantage of our mistakes defensively," said Texas Southern coach Mike Davis, who had also led Indiana and UAB into the tournament. "They shared the ball well. They had one turn-over in the first half. It's hard to beat a basketball team that has one turnover."

AP Sports Writer Rusty Miller in Dayton contributed to this story.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Creighton finds success with dynamic duo

Bluejays star McDermott, wingman Gibbs look to solidify legacy with deep tournament run

By ERIC OLSON
The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — Grant Gibbs gives the basketball to Doug McDermott. McDermott gives Gibbs his scholarship.

It's been a win-win for everyone at Creighton.

With Gibbs as his wingman for three years, McDermott has ascended to near the top of the NCAA's career scoring chart. The two share an uncommon connection on the court. Off the court, they're best buddies.

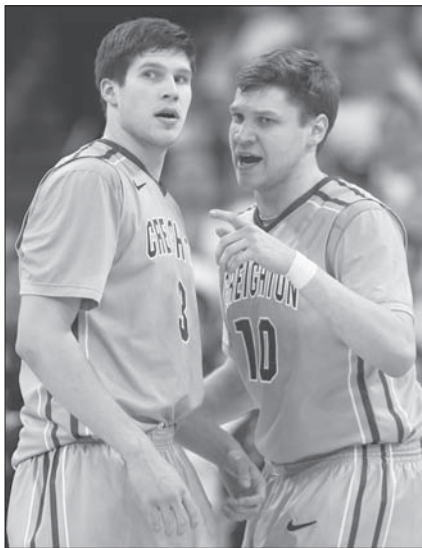
"If I'm Doug," coach Greg McDermott said, "I'm a pretty good friend of his, too, if he passes me the ball like Grant does."

Doug McDermott, the coach's son, and Gibbs began their last go-round together Friday when the third-seeded Bluejays (26-7) meet No. 14 Louisiana-Lafayette (23-11) in the NCAA tournament in San Antonio.

"We can kind of solidify what we have kind of built here with a deep tournament run," Gibbs said. "We're going to approach it the same way we have our whole time here in terms of playing loose and playing together, all the things that have helped us win a lot of games."

McDermott, the nation's top scorer at 26.9 points a game, and Gibbs are part of a senior class that has won a Creighton four-year record 106 games. The Bluejays enter the tournament shooting a nation-leading 42 percent on three-pointers and averaging 79.5 points.

Doug McDermott said he wouldn't have scored his 3,105 career points, fifth-most all time, without a lot of help from Gibbs.



NATHAN HARRIS/AP

Creighton's Doug McDermott, left, and Grant Gibbs have helped propel the Bluejays offense. With Gibbs as his wingman for three years, McDermott has ascended to near the top of the NCAA's all-time scoring chart. The two share an uncommon connection on the court, and off the court, they're best buddies.

"You guys see it firsthand," he said. "He's just a great teammate in general. He's always finding

me in the right spots. It's really been a cool duo, me and Grant."

A year ago, no one would have

predicted they would have this season together.

McDermott planned to declare for the NBA draft before Creighton left the mid-major Missouri Valley Conference and accepted an invitation to the Big East. He came back because he wanted to test himself in a power conference.

Gibbs' return was equally improbable. He started his career at Gonzaga in 2008, and his two years there were marred by shoulder and knee injuries. To Creighton's surprise, the NCAA granted Gibbs' petition for a medical hardship and a sixth year of eligibility.

Greg McDermott was in a pickle because all 13 scholarships already were allotted for 2013-14 when he found out his son and Gibbs would be back. So he shifted Doug's scholarship to Gibbs and made Doug a walk-on — a move that has cost Greg McDermott about \$44,000.

"I'm getting tired of those tuition bills," the coach said with a laugh. "But Doug will have a job (soon). I'll send him a bill. Everything will be good."

Gibbs' return has been worth every penny, as far as the coach is concerned. The 6-foot-5 Gibbs averages 7.2 points a game and is shooting a career-best 47.5 percent on three-pointers.

It's not the scoring that makes Gibbs valuable. Besides the leadership he provides, Gibbs has averaged 4.9 assists in his 98 games at Creighton. Of his 489 career assists, 231 (47 percent) have come on baskets by McDermott.

"You don't find college basketball players in this day and age that don't care if they get to shoot.

Grant's one of those guys," Greg McDermott said. "He would just as well throw a great pass as make a shot."

With his injury history, Gibbs was understandably scared in early January when he dislocated his right kneecap. Gibbs missed six games, and it was as if he hadn't left when he returned Feb. 7 against DePaul. He had a season-high eight assists, six of them setting up McDermott baskets.

Gibbs regularly finds McDermott as he's cutting through the lane or coming off a screen, or when he's looking to shoot a three as a trailer.

"Grant has the ability to throw the ball to where Doug is going to be, not where he is at that moment," Greg McDermott said. "Some guys see Doug come open and throw it right to him. Grant will throw it a couple steps ahead of him and let Doug run it down, and now it becomes an easier shot."

The Bluejays have lost in the NCAA round of 32 the last two years and have said that anything less than the Sweet 16 would be unacceptable. If they're going to get there, or further, Gibbs is going to have to keep delivering those pinpoint passes to his old friend.

After the tournament, McDermott will become his school's highest NBA draft pick since Benoit Benjamin went No. 3 overall in 1985. Gibbs plans to go into coaching.

"It's definitely pretty sad that these are our last few times together," McDermott said. "It's also exciting to know what we've done here and what we have a chance to do in the tournament."

Heartland: 'Flyover states' taking center stage for March Madness

FROM BACK PAGE

But in many ways, the success of schools such as Tulsa and Saint Louis makes little sense.

They don't have the strong tradition of Kansas. They don't have fertile recruiting grounds such as Chicago or the Dallas Metroplex in their backyards. All they have are coaches willing to grind, fans every bit as zealous as those of Duke and Kentucky, and players often overlooked by those college basketball blue-bloods who arrive on campus with a clip on their shoulders. The result? Turn on the tournament this week and you'll see Oklahoma against North Dakota State in a second-round game. Wichita State and Kansas State could meet in the third round, as could Nebraska and Creighton, a tantalizing matchup that just might generate as much interest in the state as Cornhusker football does on an autumn Saturday.

"If we're going to go and play and Nebraska is going to the NCAA tournament, why not go to the same place," asked Bluejays coach Greg McDermott. "I think it's going to be a great deal of fun."

McDermott's son, Doug, is the odds-on favorite for national player of the year. Those teams from the heartland? They're

not short on talent, even if they often have to get creative — and go to great lengths — to land some of it.

Kansas star Andrew Wiggins is a freshman of the year candidate and potential No. 1 draft pick. So is the Jayhawks' Joel Embiid, who will miss the first part of the tournament with a back injury.

Oklahoma State features a dynamic guard in Marcus Smart. Iowa State has Canadian forward Melvin Ejim, the Big 12 player of the year. Oklahoma's Cameron Clark is a game-changer. Kansas State has a talented freshman in its own right, Marcus Foster.

It's enough to make more traditional basketball states such as Indiana and Illinois — both of which were shut out of the NCAA tournament — feel just a wee bit jealous.

"There's great basketball in this area," Oklahoma State coach Travis Ford said. "You look at the Big 12 and what we've done this year being the No. 1 basketball conference in America, by far. I think it says a lot about the basketball in the Midwest right now."

Iowa State coach Fred Hoiberg, who grew up in Iowa and starred for the Cyclones, couldn't help but gush about the quality of the teams in the region — even those that didn't make the dance.



JEFFREY PHELPS/AP

Wisconsin's Nigel Hayes lays on the bench before Thursday's game against American.

"I've been very impressed with what Tim Miles has done at Nebraska, and the ending they had, going on the road and winning at Michigan State, having a big run. North Dakota State, I'm a big fan of that team and that coach, so yeah, Midwest has got pretty good teams," he said.

Oklahoma coach Lon Kruger grew up in Silver Lake, Kan., played at Kansas State and later coached there. But he's also coached at Florida and UNLV, and with the

Knicks and the Hawks in the NBA. And the college hoops haven't played in the Midwest this season? As good as he's ever seen.

"Obviously, you're selected to play in this tournament, you're selecting the best 68 teams in the country," Kruger said Monday, "and a lot come from the Midwest and the heartland, and basketball here in these leagues is outstanding."

Now it's up to them to prove just how good against the rest of America.

NCAA TOURNAMENT



SHELBY TAUBER, THE DAILY TALKAN/AP

Iowa State's DeAndre Kane is one of the best rebounding guards in the country and could help the No. 3-seeded Cyclones go far.

Iowa State primed for extended run

BY LUKE MEREDITH
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — The next step for coach Fred Hoiberg and his surging Cyclones would be a long run in the NCAA tournament.

Third-seeded Iowa State has the pieces to make a push for the Final Four — and the Cyclones are playing their best basketball at exactly the right time.

Iowa State (26-7) beat Kansas State, Kansas and Baylor over three days to win the Big 12 tournament for the first time since 2000. By far the most talented team Hoiberg has had in four seasons at Iowa State opens tournament play in the East Region on Friday night against North Carolina Central (28-5).

We "played three excellent teams, and all three played different styles. Everything we've done to this point is [about] playing your best basketball at this time of year," Hoiberg said. "Hopefully we'll build off of what we did in the tournament last week."

The Cyclones have become a trendy pick in the brackets partly because they're such a difficult team to plan against.

Point guard DeAndre Kane, the MVP of the Big 12 tournament, is averaging 17 points and a Big 12-leading 5.8 assists per game. But he's also one of the best rebounding guards in the country at 6.7 a game, and his ability to post up defenders gives the Cyclones an extra weapon. Georges Niang's ability to knock down threes and drive to the rim for baskets off on spin moves is unusual for a 6-foot-7 college forward.

While Melvin Ejim might be more of a traditional small forward, he was named the Big 12's Player of the Year this season and has 32 career double-doubles. The Cyclones have a stand-out rebounder and energy guy to

pair with Ejim in forward Dustin Hogue, who helps them compensate for their lack of a true center.

They also start a freshman guard on pace to break the NCAA record for assist-to-turnover ratio in Monte Morris and have a backup guard, Naz Long, who twice hit long threes at the buzzer to help Iowa State avoid losses to Oklahoma State.

The Cyclones also played one of the most difficult and varied schedules in the country, so they're unlikely to be surprised by a defense. In addition to a round-robin schedule in the Big 12, which saw seven of its 10 teams reach the NCAA tournament, Iowa State beat Michigan, BYU and Iowa in non-conference play.

The Cyclones aren't afraid to play from behind, either. They've erased double-digit deficits to win eight times and are 7-4 when trailing at halftime.

"We've had our backs against the wall against some teams. You think you don't have a chance. But then you find a way to pull it out. And again, that all leads to confidence, which is so important ... and we're a confident team right now," Hoiberg said.

Iowa State isn't perfect, of course.

The Cyclones have been known to suffer through stretches of cold shooting and inattentive defense, and they've been susceptible at times to opposing big men in the post. But for the most part, Iowa State looks like a team primed for a strong performance in the NCAA tournament.

"Our chemistry has been very good, and we've handled adversity well so far with this group. I'm sure that at some point in every game we play the rest of the season, we'll be challenged," Hoiberg said. "So far this team has shown that it handles it very well."

A calming influence

Kruger quietly guides Oklahoma back to prominence

BY CLIFF BRUNT
The Associated Press

The emcee at Oklahoma's year-end banquet, Toby Roldan, paused to recall a recent conversation with coach Lon Kruger.

The "Voice of the Sooners" asked Kruger when he'd last been assessed a technical foul. Kruger paused, then said it was back when he coached the NBA's Atlanta Hawks more than 10 years ago.

While demonstrative coaches fill the highlights and grab headlines, the 61-year-old Kruger remains in control. The only coach to take five different schools to the NCAA tournament has done it the same way each time — by using his calm demeanor, deep basketball knowledge and knack for cultivating relationships to get the most out of his teams.

"He never yells," sophomore forward Ryan Spangler said. "He just knows how to coach people."

Kruger took Kansas State to the regional finals in 1988, Florida to the Final Four in 1994 and UNLV to the regional semi in 2007. Oklahoma went 15-16 his first year in 2011-12, then reached the NCAA tournament last season. This season, the Sooners cracked Top 25 for the first time since 2009 and have returned to the NCAA tournament.

Oklahoma (23-9), the No. 5 seed in the West Region, opens tournament play Thursday against No. 12 seed North Dakota State (25-6) in Spokane, Wash.

Getting the team to this point might be one of Kruger's better coaching jobs. Oklahoma was picked to finish in the middle of the pack in the Big 12 after losing its top three scorers from last season.

Mainstays blossomed and newcomers fit in. Guard Buddy Hield more than doubled his scoring average as a sophomore and led the

team with 16.8 points per game. Clark, the only senior starter, averaged 15.3 points. Spangler, a transfer from Gonzaga, averaged 9.8 points and 9.4 rebounds while shooting 59 percent from the field. Isaiah Cousins, a sophomore, averages 10.8 points and spearheads the team's perimeter defense. Freshman point guard Jordan Woodard averages 10.3 points and 4.7 assists.

Even with the youth and new faces, the Sooners finished second in the conference with no first-team All-Big 12 players. For that, Kruger was named the league's Coach of the Year.

"I just think he got everybody to buy in, just buying in with hard work, just going hard and doing everything on the defensive end," Clark said.

Kruger said this team's success is special because the squad needed unity to reach its potential, especially given the talent level of the rest of the conference. Seven of the 10 Big 12 teams earned NCAA tournament bids.

"I think it was obvious from the start that this group was going to invest and put the time in," he said. "That's a great starting point. They really like each other. They like making plays for each other. Combine that with the investment of time, and you've got a chance to make good things happen."

Though Kruger is accomplished, the players say the interactions with him trump everything. His basketball knowledge allows him to speak quietly, yet still get his point across.

"The first time I'd seen him

in practice drawing on a board — it's crazy how smart he is," Spangler said. "That made me respect him right then."

That respect allows Kruger to speak softly. "He's the type of guy you want to listen to," Spangler said. "You don't want to upset him or make him mad at you, so all of our team, we just listen to whatever he says. Obviously, he's right most of the time."

Kruger transfers the knowledge to results by helping the players bond.

"He gets us as a team to play together," Hield said. "I think him doing that, bringing us together, even eating together, stuff like that — little things like that help us win."

Even with a low volume, Kruger pushes his team. Oklahoma started the season winning by posting high point totals, but Kruger knew that to compete in the Big 12, the Sooners would have to play better defense. In practice and in news conferences, the message was the same. Finally, the Sooners got it, and the wins followed. Oklahoma finished with a 12-6 record in conference play.

"He's been harping on us all season about defense, and we finally listened to him the last month of the season because he knows what he's talking about, and we really bought into what he's talking about," Spangler said.

Both at the banquet and at his media session after the NCAA tournament selections were announced, Kruger deflected credit.

"It's been a fun group," he said. "It's been fun to watch them make the progress. It's been fun to watch them, as much as anything, buy into trusting each other to take care of respective responsibilities."



Head coach Lon Kruger led a young Oklahoma team to second place in the Big 12 with no first-team all-conference players on the roster.

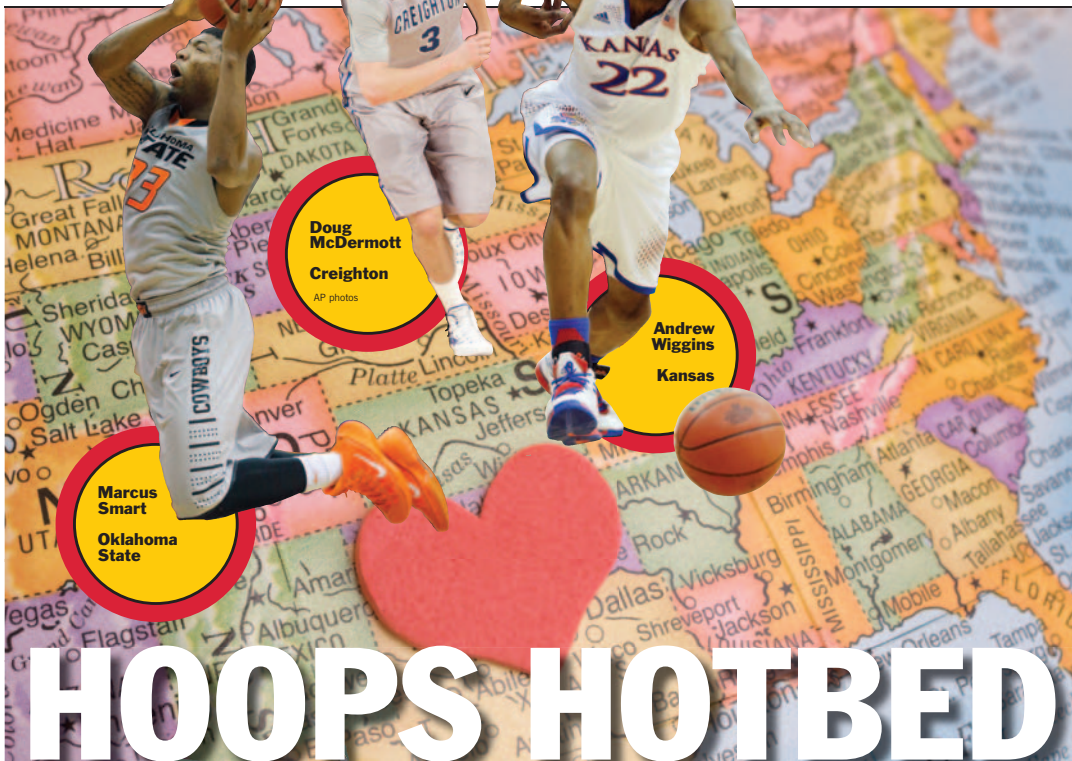
YOUNG KWAK/AP

‘He never yells. He just knows how to coach people.’

Ryan Spangler
Oklahoma sophomore forward

SPORTS

Knicks open Jackson
era with victory
NBA roundup, Page 26



Doug
McDermott
Creighton

AP photos

Andrew
Wiggins
Kansas

Marcus
Smart
Oklahoma
State

North Dakota State
(25-6)
Fargo



Wisconsin
(26-7)
Madison



Milwaukee
(21-13)



Nebraska
(19-12)
Lincoln



Iowa State
(26-7)
Ames



Creighton
(26-7)
Omaha

Kansas State
(20-12)
Manhattan



Kansas
(24-9)
Lawrence



Saint Louis
(26-6)



Tulsa
(21-12)

Wichita State
(34-0)



Oklahoma
(23-9)
Norman



Oklahoma State
(21-12)
Stillwater

Heartland well represented in NCAA tournament field

By DAVE SKRETTA
The Associated Press

BLAWRENCE, Kan. — Bill Self was born in Edmond, Okla. He played basketball at Oklahoma State, and cut his teeth in the coaching profession at Kansas. He built programs at Oral Roberts and Tulsa, and is now leading the Jayhawks in their pursuit of another national championship.

More than just about anybody, Self appreciates the rise of hoops in the heartland.

All three of the Sunflower State's programs are back in the NCAA tournament this year, and all are ninth seeds or better, led by No. 1 seed Wichita State (34-0). There are three schools from Oklahoma in the dance.

Two from Nebraska. Two more made it from Iowa, although the Iowa Hawkeyes are already gone. Saint Louis is in the field, too.

Not a bad showing from America's breadbasket, those sparsely populated "flyover states" that are supposed to be lean on talent and generate little buzz from folks on the coasts.

"Hopefully we'll pull for each other," Self said, "but it is interesting."

In some ways it makes sense. The epicenter of college basketball, many argue, resides in Lawrence at the school where James Naismith and Phog Allen were not only coaches but also the game's inventor and pioneer. The Jayhawks play home games in Allen Fieldhouse, of course, a bastion of basketball situated at the base of a hill on Naismith Drive.

SEE HEARTLAND ON PAGE 30

■ Kruger guiding
Sooners to prominence
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■ Vols, Cal Poly
complete field of 64
Page 29